

Revised July 2017

The following are references for **Programs that assist Soldiers and their families in Minnesota**  
Compliments of Minnesota Army Reserve Ambassador's Tom Haugo, Jim Lundell, & Steve Carter.  
The balance of the programs apply to all Soldiers & their families in all states.

**M** indicates specific programs that help Minnesota Soldiers and their families.

Corrections or additions please email [tomhaugo@gmail.com](mailto:tomhaugo@gmail.com) or call me at 952-412-7525

**NOTE: \*\* Red indicates change/new since 1 June 2017**

### **Veteran Friendly Verizon**

Did you know Verizon offers ongoing discounts to active duty servicemembers and veterans, including 15% off monthly Verizon wireless cellphone service and 25% off select accessories like chargers, cellphone cases, and batteries? To learn more or register for discounts, visit [www.vz.to/1JGTpOd](http://www.vz.to/1JGTpOd).

The company also has been rated one of the most military-friendly employers in the world by Military Times. Veteran job seekers can use Verizon's website ([www.verizon.com/about/careers/military](http://www.verizon.com/about/careers/military)) to search for Verizon careers that closely match their military experience; join Verizon's military network and upload resumes; and contact Verizon Military recruiters with just one mouse click. (from July 2017 MOA Military Officer magazine page 14)

### **FOCUS (Families Over Coming Under Stress)**

The FOCUS Project provides resilience training to military spouses & children. The service consists of several skill-building sessions that teach families practical skills to help them overcome common challenges related to military service, effectively solve problems, and successfully set goals to create a shared family story. FOCUS resilience training is designed to help service-members and their family members remain supportive of each other during stressful times. For more information, include a list of installations where FOCUS services are available, visit [www.focusproject.org](http://www.focusproject.org).

(from July 2017 MOA Military Officer magazine page 16)

XXX

### **M - Caring for Caregivers**

Our promise is for every caregiver to never feel overwhelmed but rather appreciated, valued, and supported as they care for a loved one.

Offerings:

Individual Coaching and Mentoring

Caregiver Appreciation Events

Business & Organizational training Workshops

Online Video & Document Libraries

Caregiver Support Network

For information about caregiving, go to [www.caregiverstrong.org](http://www.caregiverstrong.org)

For information about solving financial crises, go to [www.bridgepaths.com](http://www.bridgepaths.com)

For information about Christian spiritual crises, go to [www.majorhope.com](http://www.majorhope.com)

Address 516 Wood Way, Burnsville, MN 55337

<http://www.caregiverstrong.org>

[jchaya@caregiverstrong.org](mailto:jchaya@caregiverstrong.org)

Jake Chaya 612-414-5182

### **M - The Mission Continues**

Empowering Veterans to serve their communities in new ways.

The Mission Continues empowers veterans who are adjusting to life at home to find purpose through community impact. We connect veterans to the heart of community improvement efforts by tapping into their unique leadership and skills developed in the military, and their spirit of service to the help the community do even more.

### The Fellowship Program

The Mission Continues Fellow is a post 9/11 veteran who, through an application and interview process, is selected to serve for 6 months, 20 hours a week at a non-profit organization of their choice. During the fellowship, fellows will complete a professional development curriculum, receive a monthly cost of living stipend and one on one coaching from Mission Continues Staff.

The Mission Continues has award 1600+ Fellowships across the country with fellows serving at national monuments, historic sites, youth and public service organizations and more.

Contact Lee Freeman, City Impact Manager, Minneapolis, MN [lfreeman@missioncontinues.org](mailto:lfreeman@missioncontinues.org)  
612-202-7958 [www.missioncontinues.org](http://www.missioncontinues.org)

XXX

### MOAA Supports Military Caregivers

MOAA supports military caregivers through their work with Elizabeth Dole Foundation, USAA, the PsychArmor Institute, and the Public Counsel Law Center. Categories include:

>An online guide for legal and financial aspects of military caregiving at [www.moaa.org/caregiver](http://www.moaa.org/caregiver)

>No-cost legal assistance to mid- and lower-income caregivers at [www.lawyersforheroes.org](http://www.lawyersforheroes.org), provided by MOAA and Public Counsel Law Center via the Lawyers and Heroes collaboration.

>Financial education for military caregivers from MOAA and the PsychArmor Institute, in cooperation with USAA – learn more at [www.moaa.org/caregiverfinancialed](http://www.moaa.org/caregiverfinancialed).

### – DEER ID Card processing office at Ft Snelling new phone 612-467-7648

Hours 700 AM – 1200 noon Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Closed Wednesday and Federal holidays

Requires 2 forms of ID for most transactions. Call with your questions.

506 Roeder Circle, Ft Snelling, St. Paul, MN 55111

### VA Loan Limit Increased to \$424,100 for 2017

Attention Retiree,

The VA has increased the VA Home Loan Benefit to up to **\$424,100** financing for 2017. In fact, in some higher cost counties have up to **\$636,150** in VA Loan Financing.

### The VA Loan Still Means \$0 Down & NO PMI.

Qualified buyers have the ability to buy or refinance using the increased financing amounts without the traditional 20% down or PMI payments. Now is the time to get information from VA Loan Lenders.

### Buy or Refi Now: Take Advantage of Your VA Loan Benefit Today

XXX

### AAFES: Will open to all honorably discharged veterans on Veterans Day 2017

#### Welcoming home all of America's veterans with online shopping benefits

DALLAS – After four years of coordination with the Departments of Defense, Army and Air Force as well as several other federal agencies, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) will welcome home approximately 15 million veterans on Nov. 11.

“AAFES is honored to offer this well-deserved benefit to those who raised their right hands, took the oath and served our Nation with honor,” said AAFES Director/CEO Tom Shull. “There are many generations of service members who have not been properly recognized for their sacrifices. The Veterans Online Shopping Benefit (VOSB) acknowledges their service and welcomes them home.”

Extending online shopping ([shopmyexchange.com](http://shopmyexchange.com)) privileges to all honorably discharged veterans will directly improve family and support programs for Soldiers, Airmen and their families. Consistent with each exchange's dividend policy, increased earnings as a result of VOSB are expected to generate tens of millions of dollars in increased annual dividends to Quality-of-Life programs for the military community including contingency operations, Army child development centers, youth services and fitness centers, Air Force outdoor recreation, combat uniforms, overseas school lunches and more.

VOSB also strengthens AAFES' online business to better serve current shoppers. Including honorably discharged veterans will conservatively double exchanges' online presence, improving the experience for all shoppers. From technology upgrades to associate training to inventory planning, AAFES has been working on implementation of VOSB since it was first proposed in 2013. As a result, most of the required business capabilities are already in place, and AAFES will be ready for a smooth rollout on Veterans Day.

"AAFES, along with its sister exchanges, is ensuring America's veterans are honored for their service and recognized as Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors for life," said Shull. "We look forward to welcoming our veterans home this Veterans Day and every day thereafter."

**XXX**

## **MyVA311: One number to call to reach VA**

When the VA Secretary first started evaluating business and customer service practices across VA to improve the Veteran experience, the need for a revamped phone system was clear. Instead of navigating dozens of automated phone trees with no guarantee of success, Veterans needed one place to call to get connected to the right place quickly

VA is introducing **1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311)** as a go-to source for Veterans and their families who don't know what number to call. This new national toll-free number will help eliminate the feeling of frustration and confusion that Veterans and their families have expressed when navigating the 1000-plus phone numbers that currently exist.

With **1-844-MyVA311**, Veterans, families, and caregivers can access information about VA services like disability, pension, healthcare eligibility, enrollment, and burial benefits, in addition to a self-service locator to find the nearest VA facility. And if they're looking for immediate assistance with housing or are having a mental health crisis, MyVA311 will route callers to the Homeless Veteran help line and the Veterans Crisis Line.

If you know what number you're calling – keep calling it. None of the existing VA numbers will go away. The future vision is that **1-844-MyVA311** will become a 24/7 one-stop information service platform for all VA services.

Veteran feedback has been instrumental helping us streamline the way we get callers routed to the right place at VA. VA is also making improvements to the overall Veteran experience eliminating blocked calls and hiring more people to reduce wait times. We will continue to gather feedback from our Veterans to ensure VA is meeting their needs.

The new **MyVA311** phone number is just one step in a larger effort to modernize VA contact centers so Veterans have a seamless, positive experience when reaching out VA. In the coming months, we will be sharing more on additional steps as we continue to improve the Veterans experience.



- **Give an Hour**



A national network of mental health care providers who give an hour of their time each week to help members of the military and their families cope with the "unseen wounds" associated with military service. With over 5,000 members and growing, these caring professionals can provide tens of millions of dollars in free mental health services each year.

Web site: [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org)



Calculate Your 2017 Pay Raise

Download the FREE Military Pay App!

*Update: The 2.1 percent pay raise for 2017 has been passed into law.*

Military pay will see a 2.1 percent increase for 2017, compared to 2016 levels. The military pay tables below apply to active members of the Navy, Marines, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

The calculator above (and related tables below) reflect 2017 monthly pay based on the 2.1 percent pay raise, which is effective as of January 1, 2017. This pay increase will be reflected in your January 15 paycheck.

Factors That Affect Military Pay

The Annual Pay Raise

Longevity raises virtually every 2 years (based on the number of years in service)

Promotions

Number of Drill Periods (Guard and Reserve only)

Basic Allowance for Housing Increases: BAH (based on location)

Basic Allowance for Subsistence Increases: BAS

Cost of Living Allowance Increases: COLA (based on location)

And Special Pay(s) (based on occupations: Language Skills, Combat, Flight, Hazardous Duty)

2017 Military Pay Charts:

2017 Active Duty Pay Charts

2017 Drill Pay Charts

To calculate your complete military pay, including base pay, BAH and other special pays, use the Military Pay Calculator.

**XXX**

### **M - Gold Star Family Connection at Mall of America Holiday for Heroes**

December 11, 2016 | [Gold Star Families](#),

Join Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and your fellow Gold Star Family Members at Mall of America's 3rd Annual Holiday for Heroes!

Families will enjoy discounted hotel rates, breakfast, a resource fair, free rides, and a visit from Santa!

Gold Star Families will enjoy private space all day to connect, relax, and catch up at Nickelodeon Universe's Parkview Meeting and Event Space, with a balcony view of the amusement park!

Catered lunch and a family activity will take place at 11:30 a.m.

[More information and registration.](#)

Once registered, email [ashley.laganiere@state.mn.us](mailto:ashley.laganiere@state.mn.us) to let us know how many in your party will be joining us at the Parkview for lunch and activities!

Permalink: <http://mn.gov/mdva/news/events/index.jsp?id=1066-263431>

[View entire list](#)

**XXX**

### **YMCA Waives Joiner's Fee for Veterans and Families**

Minneapolis, MN - Effective November 1, all Minnesota YMCAs, a leading nonprofit dedicated to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, will waive the joiner's fee for veterans and their families. The monthly membership fee still applies.

The Minneapolis and St. Cloud VA Health Care Systems and the Minnesota Alliance of YMCAs recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that drops the enrollment fee and also allows the VA to use space at YMCA facilities for outreach events. The MOU is for a 28-month period.

"Our nation's veterans, and their families, have dedicated so much in service to our country," said Theresa Hillis, chair of the Minnesota Alliance of YMCAs. "The Y is honored to have the opportunity to show our appreciation by doing what we do best - improving the lives of individuals in the communities we serve. Minnesota is proud to join many YMCAs across the nation that are already working with the VA and providing services directly to veterans, and honoring their service."

The fee waiver applies to all Minnesota veterans, including those who are not receiving VA benefits.



To apply for YMCA membership, veterans should go to their local YMCA and present their Veteran's Health Identification Card, a copy of their DD214 form or a military ID card.

A list of all Minnesota YMCA locations is available at: [www.mn-y.org/locations](http://www.mn-y.org/locations).

"The purpose for developing this partnership was to improve access to fitness opportunities and enhance the overall well-being of veterans and their families throughout the state," said Dr. Kathlene Scholljegerdes, a psychologist and health behavior coordinator at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

The local outreach activities will depend on space availability at each YMCA. Outreach activities could include job fairs, town hall meetings and events related to employment, homelessness and healthy lifestyle programming.

"This important partnership is only a beginning but we envision other creative opportunities to work together with the YMCA to benefit our veterans," said Patrick Kelly, director of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

The Minnesota partnership is an extension of a national level agreement announced in December 2015 by VA Secretary Robert McDonald that the VA and Y-USA had agreed to work together on a national level to improve veterans' health.

One of the VA's goals under Secretary McDonald is to "enhance and develop trusted partnerships."

**XXX**



**M Over 2,400 military service members still eligible to claim 2012 military tax credit**

The Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone for service in 2012 will expire for most qualifying service members on October 15, 2016. The Minnesota Department of Revenue is reminding Minnesota service members to take advantage of the refundable tax credit before it expires. The 2012 credit is \$120 per month, or partial month served.

The department recently sent letters explaining how to claim the credit to over 2,400 service members who may qualify. Service members have already claimed more than \$2.4 million in refunds for the 2012 credit, with an average refund of \$600.

"The expiring credit could be worth hundreds of dollars to Minnesota service members and their families, and we want to remind them to claim the credit before the mid-October deadline," said Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly.

To qualify for the credit, service members must have:

- served in a combat zone or qualified hazardous-duty area anytime on or after January 1, 2012,
- been a Minnesota resident during the time of service, and
- received combat pay which is exempt from federal and Minnesota income tax.

To receive the credit, service members must:

- file [Form M99, Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone](#), and
- attach corresponding Form DD-214 for each period of qualifying service.
  - If still on active duty, attach Leave and Earnings statements for each month of qualifying service.

For more information on the military tax credit and to fill out the form, visit our website at [www.revenue.state.mn.us](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us). Applications must be postmarked by October 15, 2016.

[Check out and share our video](#) which explains who qualifies and how to claim the Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone.

Tax credits for service in a combat zone are also available for 2013, 2014 and 2015. For more information, visit the [Members of the Military](#) page on our website and sign up for email updates on military credits, application deadlines, and tax law changes.

For information on combat zone locations that qualify for the tax credit, visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).



**XXX**

**M** Military Retiree:

1. The cutoff date for Mystic Lake Hotel reservations (Friday and/or Saturday) has been changed (moved up) to August 31st, 2016.
2. There may be road construction in the Mystic Lake area so, plan accordingly.
3. The registration deadline for the Joint Retiree Appreciation Day to be held on 24-SEP-2016 has been extended to September 16th (postmarked on or before).

Again, this year's event will be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.  
If you haven't registered for JRAD 2016 yet, please consider doing so.

Be reminded that there will be NO mailings this year so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, associates, etc. For this reason, it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

This year's registration form along with more information can be found on the JRAD website:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrad/>

Again, regular registration is required by Sept. 16th, 2016.

Have a great Labor Day Weekend!!!

JRAD 2016 Committee

USAREC has launched a social media campaign and a public facing M2S video on 15 August 2016. The video is designed to attract more students and educators to M2S showing how the Army is truly a partner in education.

**\*MARCH2SUCCESS CAMPAIGN KICK OFF!!** - A new March2Success social media campaign kicked off this morning using #DontSettle4Cs. New content will be added for download each week at <https://sites.google.com/a/goarmy.com/usarecsmguide/march2success-campaign> <<https://sites.google.com/a/goarmy.com/usarecsmguide/march2success-campaign>>. You can also find the full communications plan with a release schedule on the Google site. You can either download the content or share directly from [www.facebook.com/USAREC](http://www.facebook.com/USAREC) <<http://www.facebook.com/USAREC>> or @USARECPAO on Twitter. The new video launched today at <https://www.facebook.com/USAREC/videos/10153791150206658/>, and the first graphic will launch Wednesday.

\*Army pushes college test prep (Kim Hefling // Politico's Morning Education)  
STORY LINK: <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-education/2016/08/army-pushes-college-test-prep-215877>  
THE ARMY WANTS YOU ... TO USE ITS TEST PREP PROGRAM: That's right, the Army has a standardized test preparation program that includes seven free ACT and SAT practice exams. It's rolling out a social media push today using the hashtag #DontSettle4Cs to promote the program, called March2Success. It includes self-paced tutoring focused heavily on English and math that can be monitored by a teacher or parent, and has been used by 1.7 million people since 2003. But Army officials say it's barely been promoted, and they want to change that.

I appreciate your support in helping USAREC with our campaign to promote the M2S video to ensure we have combine effort in promoting M2S to help all students achieve academic success across the nation.

XXX

### **M MN Military Retiree JRAD:**

The Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (24 SEP 2016) is fast approaching and we are looking forward to seeing you there.

This year's event will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.  
If you haven't registered for JRAD 2016 yet, please consider doing so.

Be reminded that there will be NO mailings this year so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, associates, etc. For this reason, it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

This year's registration form along with more information can be found on the JRAD website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrad/>

Early Bird Registration: A drawing will be held for: one night stay at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino for two; buffet for two; and concert tickets of your choice for two. Early Bird Registration must be received at Navy RAO by August 12, 2016.



Regular Registration is required by Sept. 15th, 2016.  
JRAD 2016 Committee

XXX

### **M 2015/2016 Legislative Accomplishments for Veterans' Benefits**

- Excluded all military retirement pay from state income taxes (HF 40 – Heintzeman)
    - o Minnesota went from one of a small number of states that fully taxed military pensions to one of a dozen that does not tax them at all
    - o Over 18,000 retired military members in Minnesota will benefit from this change
    - o This will help encourage more retired military members to come to Minnesota for postmilitary careers
  - Allowed active duty military members and their families to immediately qualify for higher education grants and scholarships (HF 841 – Dettmer)
    - o Prior to this change, active duty members of the National Guard and US Military and their families would have to live in Minnesota for one-year before qualifying for state grants and scholarships for higher education
  - Permitted counties to create a private military discharge record registry to make it easier for veterans to access their discharge records (HF 546 – Dettmer)
    - o This will make it easier for veterans to track down their DD 214 form wherever they end up moving to in the state
    - o The registry will be private and determining which county has the DD 214 in their possession
  - Created a waiver system to make it easier for military members, veterans, and their spouses to keep their real estate licenses (HF 3252 – Newberger)
    - o Allows for the military members, veterans, and their spouses to bypass the continuous education requirements and to take the broker examination for free if they have been deployed overseas
  - Provided funding for veteran rent subsidies in Anoka County (HF 2565 – Newton)
    - o The funding is a one-time \$100,000 appropriation
    - o There is a new facility in Anoka that is run by a non-profit that wants to provide affordable housing for veterans and their families
  - Provided additional funding to the State Soldiers Assistance Program (HF 3168 – Anderson, S.)
    - o The funding is a one-time \$200,000 appropriation
    - o The State Soldiers Assistance Program is a cash assistance program that helps veterans pay for the cost of dental, optical, housing, and utility costs
  - Made changes to the state's Veterans Preference Act to ensure that the employer pays the cost of the hearing and lawyers' fees if the veteran prevails (HF 3416 – Howe)
    - o The three-member panels for the hearing are eliminated in favor of a mediator from the Bureau of Mediation Services
    - o Allows employers to have up to a one-year probationary period before the Veterans Preference Act applies
  - Made it easier for National Guard members deployed by the Governor to vote (HF 501 – Fenton)
    - o Allows those members to use overseas voting procedures
    - o Previously, there was no way for these members of the National Guard to vote
  - Allowed driver's licenses to include a veteran designation (HF 2749 – Knoblach)
    - o Makes it easier for veterans to identify themselves as veterans without carrying additional documentation
- Veterans' Healthcare
- Increased funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs and state veterans homes by \$17 million (SF 888 – Anderson, S.)
    - o The funding is for a 5% compensation increase for the Veterans Healthcare Division and for

supplemental funding for all of the state homes

- o MDVA will also not be able to close down any homes without legislative approval
- Provided funding for study of unmet mental health needs for Minnesota veterans (HF 2680 – Ecklund)
- o The funding is a one-time \$150,000 appropriation
- Provided funding for a study to determine what partnerships exist for MDVA in providing interim housing to disabled veterans (HF 3550 – Johnson, S.)
- o The funding is a one-time \$250,000 appropriation

Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

- Created a state-based veteran-owned small business certification program (HF 141 – Dettmer)
- o This enables veteran-owned small businesses to get certified by the state instead of the federal government which is far more efficient
- Made it easier for veteran-owned small businesses to get state government contracts (HF 3109 – Dettmer)
- o Contains several new incentives for using veteran-owned small businesses including awarding no-bid contracts under \$25,000 to targeted group businesses and new avenues to steer contracts to targeted group businesses

Honoring Veterans

- Established Military Spouses and Families Day to honor military families (HF 450 – Lohmer)
- o The day is on the Sunday preceding Memorial Day
- Approved a memorial to the state's Medal of Honor winners on the Capitol grounds (HF 2342 – Dettmer)
- o It would be privately financed
- Encouraged schools to add a focus on Medal of Honor winners in their character development curriculum. (HF 3167 – Dettmer)
- o The curriculum is supported by the Medal of Honor Convention Twin Cities and the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation
- o The Congressional medal of Honor Foundation brings in Medal of Honor winners for teacher training sessions
- Provided additional funding for the Veterans Voices program (HF 3072 – Hancock)
- o The funding is a one-time \$95,000 appropriation
- o The Veterans Voices program is run through the Humanities Center to highlight the impact veterans have on our state
- Provided funding for radio programming related to the Veterans Voices program (HF 3850 – Lesch)
- o The funding is a one-time \$50,000 appropriation to AMPERS
- Designated the Honor and Remember Flag as a symbol of the state's commitment to fallen military members (HF 146 – Dettmer)
- o The flag is encouraged to be flown on specified days relating to the armed forces
- Provided funding for an archivist at the Minnesota Military Museum (HF 1190 – Kresha)
- o The funding is a one-time \$100,000 appropriation

Veteran Tax Bill Provisions (Vetoed by Governor Dayton)

- Would have expanded the Military Service Credit (HF 848 – Davids)
- o The Military Service Credit would be increased from \$750 to \$1,000
- o The phase-out of the credit would begin at the \$50,000 threshold instead of the current \$30,000
- Would have extended the property tax exclusion for the spouse of a disabled veteran following the veteran's death (HF 147 – Dettmer)
- o The current exclusion is available to the spouse of a veteran with 70% or more disability rating for eight years following the veteran's death
- o The exclusion would be available to the spouse with no limit on the amount of years until the home changes ownership or until the spouse remarries

**March2Success**

In my recent contact with Senior Leaders I found that there was very little knowledge of March2Success (M2S) program. I have personal experience with M2S success as my youngest son enrolled in it after getting receiving a 17 on his second try on the ACTs. After working on M2S for two months he retested and got a 24 on the ACTs. This 7 point jump made him eligible to apply to most colleges. In saying this I like to introduce you the March2Success (M2S) program. It is a free, online tutorial program used by students, parents, and educators designed to help students perform higher on standardized tests. The highlight of the M2S program is the ability for students to use the high school and college prep course work and take up to seven free practice ACT or SAT tests. I encourage you to review the attached factsheet and go to the M2S website ([www.march2success.com](http://www.march2success.com)) to learn more about what the M2S program is all about. This free tutorial program was designed using Peterson's curriculum and is used by students, parents and educators throughout the world.

XXX

### **Minnesota Military Retiree Exemption bill passed the MN State Legislature 2106**

The provision that makes all military retirement benefits tax-exempt. Form Minnesota state taxes This measure was the result of many people working over the last two decades, and persistence in negotiations with the Senate. There are approximately 18,000 retired veterans who live in our state, and this bill will encourage them to stay in our communities and workforce once they retire from service. Minnesota is now the 46<sup>th</sup> state to exempt military retirement benefits. It is retroactive to 1 January 2016.

HOOAH!!!!!!

### **Suicide Test line Resources - AFSP**

[afsp.org](http://afsp.org) › Find Support

Find Support » **Resources.** ... National **Suicide Prevention** Lifeline Network ... Text “Start” to **741-741**. Veterans Crisis Line

XXXX

### **M New Way to Help Minnesota Veterans Get Started in Small Business**

For the first time ever, Minnesota’s Veterans will have access to a free entrepreneurship training course called Boots to Business Reboot (Reboot). Hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), with help from several local and national partners, Reboot is a two-step training program that helps Veterans learn what it takes and prepares them to dive into business ownership.

Minnesota Veterans are invited to take the first step of Reboot at a class held on two consecutive Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., May 13 and May 20, 2016, at Metropolitan State University, St. Paul Campus, 700 East 7th Street, Library Rooms 301 & 302 Saint Paul, Minn 55106. The sessions are free but space is limited.

[Register Here >>](#)



- To read information on Honoring our Military Children follow the link: [http://www.militaryonesource.mil/enewsletter?content\\_id=290648](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/enewsletter?content_id=290648)
- Connect with the Military OneSource e-newsletter for up to date information on parenting tips, Military Family Learning Network Webinars, tax refund information and much more! <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/enewsletter>
- If you haven't filed your taxes yet, there is still time! Just connect with Military OneSource tax services:

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

- The Military Spouse Education and Career Opportunity program is offering monthly webinars for information on career counseling, accessing financial assistance and job opportunities. This is a great program for Military Spouses who are seeking new career opportunities. Check out this great program at:

<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/Portal/Content/View/2790>

As always, if there is anything I can do for you, don't hesitate to contact me.

***Brenda Emerson***

Minnesota Military OneSource Consultant

Contractor

612-751-4290

[Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com](mailto:Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com)

[www.MilitaryOneSource.mil](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil)

1-800-342-9647

**Department of Defense Publishes Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal Guidance**

Press Operations

Release No: NR-111-16

March 30, 2016

The Department of Defense announced today that effective immediately, service members who are serving, or have served, in Iraq, Syria, or contiguous waters or airspace on or after June 15, 2014, who meet eligibility criteria are authorized award of the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal.

The secretary of defense signed a memorandum publishing the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal award guidance and criteria pursuant to an Executive Order issued today, "Establishing the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal."

Service members who were awarded a Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (GWOT-EM) for their qualifying service in Iraq or Syria during the period of June 15, 2014, to March 30, may exchange that GWOT-EM for the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal.

Service members should contact their respective military departments for additional guidance and for determinations regarding eligibility for the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal.

The new medal design may be viewed [here](#).

<http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/708442/department-of-defense-publishes-inherent-resolve-campaign-medal-guidance?source=GovDelivery>

**XXX**



Minnesota  
Humanities  
Center



## **M** -Minnesota Humanities Center Accepting Nominations for 2016 *Veterans' Voices* Award

**March 10, 2016—ST. PAUL, Minn.**—The Minnesota Humanities Center is now accepting nominations for its 2016 *Veterans' Voices Award*, recognizing Minnesota Veterans who served honorably in the military and have gone above and beyond the call of duty in their communities, in their professions, and/or in volunteerism. *Veterans' Voices* is a statewide program of the Humanities Center that draws on the power of the humanities to call attention to the stories and contributions of Veterans, giving an authentic voice to the Veteran experience through play, art discussion groups, and the *Veterans' Voices Award*.

The Humanities Center invites nominations of candidates who fall into one of two categories: On the Rise (40 and under) or Legacy (over 40). The *Veterans' Voices Award* honors actively engaged former and current military service members who are thriving and making significant, positive contributions that improve the lives of people across Minnesota. Award nominations will be accepted today through June 3, 2016.

These Awards, now in their fourth year, will be presented at the **Veterans' Voices Award Ceremony** to be held at the *Anderson Student Center* on the campus of *St. Thomas University* in St. Paul on September 11, 2016. WCCO-TV reporter and Veteran, Reg Chapman, will again emcee this event. Past award presenters include Governor Mark Dayton and Retired Major General Larry Shellito, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

According to David O'Fallon, President of the Minnesota Humanities Center, "The *Veterans' Voices Award* celebrates the positive and essential role of the Veteran in the future of our state—they make outstanding contributions as community leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, artists, and more."

Since 9/11/2001 more than 88,000 men and women from Minnesotans have been deployed and many have returned home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These Veterans are our neighbors, neighbors who defended the freedom of all Americans.

"Being honored with the *Veterans' Voices Award* has meant I've been able to hear many wonderful Veteran stories as well as tell my own," said Nick Swaggert, a Marine Corps Veteran and a 2015 *Veterans' Voices* Awardee. "Sharing our stories and working with the next generation of Veterans is both a continuation of our service and a moral obligation. I would encourage those positively impacted by a Veteran to nominate someone whose story should be heard. Only then will people understand our world."

*Veterans' Voices* strives to solidify a network of Veterans and civilians, brings Minnesota Veterans together through the humanities, and forms a public narrative that affirms Veterans as positive leaders in our communities.

Nominations must include answers to questions detailing a candidate's contributions and reasons they exemplify the mission and values of the Humanities Center. Two information sessions will be hosted for interested nominators, covering eligibility requirements and qualifiers and providing tips for completing the nomination form. An **In-person Information Session** will be held on Friday, April 15, 2016 at the Humanities Center in St. Paul, and an **Online Webinar Information Session** will be held on Tuesday, April 19, 2016.

For more information about the *Veterans' Voices Award* nomination process and upcoming information sessions visit [mnhum.org/vets](http://mnhum.org/vets).

Nominations may be submitted online ([mnhum.org/vets](http://mnhum.org/vets)) or by mail to:

**Minnesota Humanities Center**  
*2015 Veterans' Voices Award*  
987 Ivy Avenue East  
Saint Paul, MN 55106

**All nominations must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, June 3, 2016.** Nominees selected to receive an award will be notified by Friday, July 8, 2016. Details about the nomination and past *Veterans' Voices* awardees are available at [mnhum.org/vets](http://mnhum.org/vets).

**Contact at Minnesota Humanities Center:**

Christi Shortridge, Communications Director, 651-278-2635 (cell) or 651-772-4251 (office) [christi@mnhum.org](mailto:christi@mnhum.org)  
Trista Matascastillo, Veterans' Voices Program Officer, 651-772-4248 [trista@mnhum.org](mailto:trista@mnhum.org)

**M** *Veterans' Voices*



*Veteran Voices* draws on the power of the humanities to call attention to the stories and contributions of Veterans. This initiative amplifies, honors, and recognizes the stories and contributions of Minnesota Veterans in their own voice through plays, art, discussion groups, and the Veterans' Voices Award.

Help support *Veterans' Voices* by donating through the Minnesota Humanities Center's [Veterans' Voices Give MN](#) page.

**Goals of Our Work**

---

**Offer** meaningful resources to bring the humanities into the lives of all Minnesotans, building relationships, active engagement, and connections.

**Strengthen** our transformational work in advancing educational excellence and access for students and learners through the humanities.

**Expand** our collaborative and partnership work with individuals, groups, and organizations to engage multiple perspectives in order to build a more inclusive Minnesota.

**Ensure** effective and substantive evaluation of our programs and services.

**Build** the capacity of our full-service Event Center as a meeting ground – a place where diverse points of view are respected – and as an environment for active participation.

**Support**



The Minnesota Humanities Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. We rely on contributed support from individuals, foundations and corporations, and government sources to grow and sustain our programs.

Your gift is tax deductible to the extent of the law.

**Donate Now**

**Donate By Mail**

Print this form and enclose it with your gift payable to Minnesota Humanities Center.

**Advocate On Our Behalf**

Contact your legislator to express your support for the Humanities Center and the importance of the humanities in your life

**Contact Us**

**Mail:**

987 Ivy Avenue East

St. Paul, MN 55106

Map

**Phone**

651-774-0105 (Office)

651-772-4242 (Event Center)

866-268-7293 (Toll Free)

**Fax:**

651-774-0205 (Office)

651-774-0045 (Event Center)

**Email**

[info@mnhum.org](mailto:info@mnhum.org) (General Inquiries)

[meetings@mnhum.org](mailto:meetings@mnhum.org) (Event Center Inquiries)

**Staff and Board**

**Employment Opportunities**

**THANK YOU!**

<http://minnesotavets.org/>

**M Veteran Resilience Project, Inc (VRP)**

My name is Paul Riedner, MBA, Iraq war veteran, Executive Director of a startup non-profit called the Veteran Resilience Project, Inc (VRP).

VRP was created to address an unfolding crisis in our community. A community that doesn't care for those it sends to war needs healing. We are in the process of fundraising so that we may continue our successful pilot project offering free, EMDR trauma therapy to any Minnesota veteran. Please visit our crowd funding page to help us get started. If you know any public or private foundations with grants available, please reach out to

[paul@veteranresilienceproject.com](mailto:paul@veteranresilienceproject.com). The following piece provides perspective into the origin of VRP, why EMDR is the right solution for treating trauma, and why this community needs healing too. EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing.

Thank you!

<http://www.resiliencemn.org>

XXX

**M Holes For Heroes:**

To Register for our February 6, 2016 Holes For Heroes event, **[please click here!](#)**



Holes for Heroes is a special Ice Fishing Contest designed to honor our military, held each year on Medicine Lake in Plymouth, MN. Our 2016 event is brought to you by our presenting sponsor, Timber Ghost Realty.

At Holes For Heroes we work with all branches of the military to honor our troops, both at home and abroad. We set up a unique "Hole of Honor" which features a live video feed so that families of deployed soldiers can ice fish for free while being linked via video to their beloved soldier.

Fishing for Life donates a portion of the proceeds from Holes For Heroes to General Colin Powell's JROTC - Twin Cities. Remaining proceeds support the ministries of Fishing for Life, including our GEM Fishing Camps, our summer High C's events, and our Deep C's Men's Groups.

It is our honor to allow all Military members, both current and former, and their immediate families to attend Holes 4 Heroes at no charge.

Non-military members are welcome to join the Holes For Heroes Ice Fishing Contest as well. Early Bird Pre-Registration (until 1/1/16) costs \$5, Advance Registration (after 1/1/16) costs \$10, and registration the day of the contest is \$15.

We have great prizes each year including many door prizes given away throughout the contest. What a great event!

To download a PDF file of the 2016 Official Rules - **[please click here!](#)**



We made it through December and winter has finally arrived. This month, Military OneSource highlights mobile apps that assist with resiliency, financial information and of course...home heating and saving money.

- This month in the Military OneSource e newsletter, you can find information on 3 Mobile Solutions to Boost Quality of Life. These mobile tools help with resiliency, monitor and track changes and improve relationships. Check out more information on the monthly newsletter;  
[http://www.militaryonesource.com/enewsletter?content\\_id=288960](http://www.militaryonesource.com/enewsletter?content_id=288960)
- Are you financially fit? My Training Hub, has an interactive course to learn how to create smart financial goals and a realistic spending plan. My Training Hub offers many other subjects also, take a look here;  
<https://myhub.militaryonesource.com/MOS/f?p=SYS:2:0:>
- As winter has finally arrived and the winter temperatures can get the best of us, Military OneSource has great ideas on ways to save money on home heating costs.  
**25 + Ways to Save Money on Home Heating Costs**  
[http://www.militaryonesource.com/financial-and-legal/personal-financial-management-and-taxes?content\\_id=281411](http://www.militaryonesource.com/financial-and-legal/personal-financial-management-and-taxes?content_id=281411)

Tax season is here and Military OneSource offers free tax service. Just contact Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 or [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

XXX



**M** - TXT4LIFE started in 2011 in the seven-county northeastern region of Minnesota, led by Carlton County Public Health and Human Services, in collaboration with area school districts, mental health centers, Reservations, and Canvas Health/Crisis Connection Crisis Center. Locally, conversation about further suicide prevention efforts had been taking place to look at systematic changes that would help reduce the suicide rate in the region. Around the same time, a local youth suicide spurred on the involvement of students who gave crucial input into the process. A grant application was put together and later funded by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Garrett Lee Smith grant program from 2011-2014.

TXT4Life now is a service of Canvas Health, a Twin Cities 501 (c) (3) non-profit. TXT4Life regional coordinators give presentations about the service and provide training and outreach throughout Minnesota.

The Richfield-based TXT4Life center is equipped with software that allows for up to 500 individual text conversations between trained counselors and users. The center's hours of operation are 12 p.m. to 3 a.m., 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The TXT4Life program works in partnership with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL: (800) 273-8255), which answers lifeline calls from Minnesota area codes.

**TXT4Life Partners include:** Minnesota Department of Human Services, Wilder Foundation, University of St. Thomas, St. Cloud State University, Bemidji State University, Northwestern Mental Health Center, Stellher, Inc. ,

Carlton County Public Health and Human Services, Western Mental Health Center, Southwestern Mental Health Center, Central MN Mental Health Center, Educational Message Services, and HealthPartners.

- **TXT4Life hours: 12 p.m. to 3 a.m. CST**
- \* **Text “life” to 61222 - std. data and text rates apply.**

## **M Welcome to the Minnesota LinkVet Support site**

Online support is available seven days a week for Minnesota Veterans and their families. LinkVet is staffed by a team of support specialists trained through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA). Contact us by phone (1-888-LinkVet), **live chat** or **ask a question**. The support team is standing by to assist you.

### • **Find Answers**

Search our answer bank to learn more about the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), a cabinet level state agency dedicated to serving Veterans and their families by assisting them in securing state and federal benefits, and by providing programs and services relating to higher education, benefits, burial, claims, outreach and Veterans preference. MDVA also operates five Veterans Homes throughout the state, providing a continuum of long-term care for its Residents, with a strong emphasis on remembering and recognizing the service and sacrifices of all Veterans.

Search our database for more specific answers by entering keywords in the box below.

If you do not see what you are looking for, please contact us using **live chat** or by calling 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838). If it is a holiday or outside of our posted hours of operation, **ask a question** and our specialists will respond the next business day.

-  **Hot Topics**
  - **Homeless Veteran Registry**
  - **New Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC)**
  - **Support Our Troops License Plate**

### **Customer Service for Veterans and Families**

Phone: 1 (888) LinkVet (546-5838)

International: +1-651-556-0596

TTY: 1-800-627-3529

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday 7 am to 9 pm CST

Saturday 9 am to 2:30 pm CST

Sunday 11 am to 4:30 pm CST

Closed Holidays

## USA Today's Special Veterans Affairs Edition

Here is an excellent 165 page electronic version of USA Today's Special Veterans Affairs Edition. Lot of good articles and information.

<http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/USAM20151103.pdf>



The holiday season is one of the busiest times of the year, and we've got plenty of tips to help you stay healthy, happy and enjoy stress-free.

- 1. 9 Tips for Savvy Holiday Spending-** Find easy ways to save this season <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-and-legal/personal-financial-management-and-taxes?contentd=282906>
- 2. Tips to Manage Stress Over the Holiday Season-** No doubt the hustle and bustle of holiday activities and added finances are stressful. Health and Wellness Coaching is a great program to identify ways to relieve stress and get through the holidays. <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-and-wellness/managing-stress>
- 3. Tax Season is fast approaching.** I have attached the new flier for Free Online Tax Services. Please distribute. Information is available through the Military OneSource website. <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>



Tax Service Flyer pdf

- 4. The Exceptional Advocate** is an e-newsletter with updates on Military OneSource and provides information on Exceptional Family Member Program through Military Community and Family Policy. You can sign up to receive this monthly news through the provided link. <http://apps.militaryonesource.mil/efmp/news>

As always, if there is anything I can do for you, please let me know.

### **Brenda Emerson**

Minnesota Military OneSource Consultant

Contractor

612-751-4290

[Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com](mailto:Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com)

[www.MilitaryOneSource.mil](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil) 1-800-342-9647

XXX

## Green Light a Vet



This Veterans Day there was a new movement established to recognize Veterans, but just as importantly, recognize those who support our Veterans; it is called, Greenlight A Vet.

What is Greenlight A Vet? America's Veterans are some of our Nation's bravest, hardest-working men and women. However, it's hard to show them the appreciation they deserve when, back home and out of uniform, they're more camouflaged than ever. Greenlight A Vet is a campaign to establish visible national support for our Veterans by changing one light to green.

What is the meaning of green? Green is the color of hope, renewal and well-being. This Veterans Day and beyond consider changing one light to green in a visible location on your porch, in your home, or at your office and keep it glowing every day as a symbol of appreciation and support for our Veterans. Then, share your support by taking a picture of your green light and posting it on Twitter using the hashtag #GreenlightAVet.

LinkVet and County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) statewide are working together to make Minnesota a driving force in supporting Greenlight A Vet.

To find out more information or to support the Greenlight A Vet movement contact your local CVSO or go to <http://www.greenlightavet.com> or follow on Twitter @GreenlightAVet.

*\*Logo used is property of <http://www.greenlightavet.com>.*



CATCH A LIFT was started as a memorial to Cpl. Chris Coffland and founded on his lifelong philosophy that through physical fitness you can achieve your highest potential for a healthy mind and body.

His dedication and mindfulness to physical fitness was part of a daily regimen his entire life. He actively encouraged others to participate as well, so that they could lead a healthier and well balanced life.

Everyday Coffland would say "I'm goin' catch a lift"; his way of saying, he was off to the gym. In keeping with Coffland's commitment to fitness and his dedication to the wellness of others, CAL will assist wounded veterans to become physically and mentally fit again through gifted gym memberships.

- **MISSION**

To help wounded post 9-11 service members start and maintain their healing process, both mentally and physically, through physical fitness by providing them with gifted gym memberships or home gym equipment, anywhere in the United States.



- **FACTS**

- Research has shown that early intervention through physical fitness results in successful rehabilitation for wounded veterans.
- Returning veterans Post 9-11: 53,000+ wounded, 320,000 with TBI and over 400,000 with PTSD
- Suicide rate amongst returning veterans: 22 per day; that is 1 veteran every 65 minutes.(DVA 2/2014). Over 30% of returning veterans have considered suicide.
- 120-150 minutes of exercise weekly greatly improves overall health, helps to control weight, reduces the risk of heart disease, strengthens bones and muscles and improves mental health.

- **WHAT DOES CATCH A LIFT DO?**

For wounded veterans post 9-11, CATCH A LIFT will pay for yearly gym memberships. If the wounded veteran's requires assistance from their VA Caregiver, their membership will be granted as well. CATCH A LIFT also provides in-home gym equipment, if the vet is unable to attend a gym. See VET APPLICATION for more information.

- **HOW CAN I HELP?**

Make a donation. Donations are our largest source of funding. You can donate easily on our secured DONATIONS page at any time. For your convenience, donations can be made through our secured payment link, using a credit or debit card. Checks can be mailed as well. Catch A Lift is a non-profit 501 (C)(3) organization, TAX ID#27-3901149.

Become a volunteer. You can volunteer by helping spread local community awareness, sponsoring a fundraising event or participating in a fundraising event. Click on our VOLUNTEER page and become involved today.

Become a Corporate Sponsor. Sponsorship opportunities are available by visiting Contact Us .

CATCH A LIFT is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, TAX ID#27-3901149. After your donation is submitted, a confirmation will be sent and act as your receipt. Please print confirmation and retain for your tax records.

- **How to Apply**

**Please see the VET APPLICATION page for all directions on applying.**

- **WHAT GYM CAN I USE?**

Any gym in the United States may be chosen by the veteran with the exception of Planet Fitness facilities which do not accept any form of payment that Catch A Lift offers.

It is the veteran's responsibility to provide the gym information and contact person on the application form. CATCH A LIFT will grant the yearly membership for the wounded veteran and if needed, the VA CAREGIVER, in compliance with the gyms and CATCH A LIFT's criteria. See GYMS ACROSS AMERICA.



1. **Tax Season** is just around the corner there is a flier attached about the Free Online Tax Services being offered through Military OneSource. It can also be viewed this link, along with many other printable fliers:  
[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/mwr/service-providers?content\\_id=272228](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/mwr/service-providers?content_id=272228)

2. **As the Holiday Season is fast approaching take a look at 9 Tips for Savvy Holiday Spending:** [http://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-and-legal/personal-financial-management-and-taxes?content\\_id=282906](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-and-legal/personal-financial-management-and-taxes?content_id=282906)
3. **Check out our Blog Brigade: 6 Ways to Win at Speed Friend Dating** <http://blog-brigade.militaryonesource.mil/2015/10/19/6-ways-to-win-at-speed-friend-dating/>

**Brenda Emerson**

Minnesota Military OneSource Consultant  
Contractor  
612-751-4290  
[Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com](mailto:Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com)

**XXX**



**What is Give an Hour?**

- Give an Hour is a nonprofit organization providing free counseling and other mental health services to active duty service members, members of our National Guard and Reserve forces, and veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who have separated or retired from any branch of military service, along with their family members and loved ones.
- Give an Hour currently has a network of nearly 7,000 licensed mental health professionals willing to donate one hour per week of free counseling for as long as it is needed.
- Give an Hour was founded by Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in the Washington, D.C., area. Dr. Van Dahlen currently serves as President.

**Are family members eligible to receive counseling through Give an Hour?**

- In addition to military personnel and their spouses and children, Give an Hour also offers free services to parents, siblings, and unmarried partners whether or not they are entitled to receive mental health benefits through the military or VA. In short, anyone affected by a loved one's military service is eligible.

**How can I get help?**

- Visit [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org) and click on "Search for a Provider" (in the top right portion of your screen) or "For Visitors" (in the menu on the left). You will be prompted to enter your zip code, and then a list of providers in your area will appear. You can also contact us at [info@giveanhour.org](mailto:info@giveanhour.org) for help locating a provider.

**Where are Give an Hour providers located?**

- Providers are located in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam.

**What if there is no provider in my area?**

- Please contact us at [info@giveanhour.org](mailto:info@giveanhour.org). We will use our network and our relationships with the national mental health associations to locate a provider for you. Also, many of our providers are able to do telephone or video sessions.

### **The military and the VA both offer mental health services, what is unique about Give an Hour?**

- By providing services that are separate from the military establishment, we offer an essential option for men and women who might otherwise fail to seek or receive appropriate services. There is no paperwork, no insurance claims, and no money changing hands.

### **Is there a limit to the number of times I can see a counselor through Give an Hour?**

- There is no limit. Our counselors are available for as long as help is needed.

### **How can I get help for my husband/wife when they don't think they have a problem?**

- Be direct but sensitive. Say things like: "Hey, I'm worried about you." This makes it clear you are speaking out of concern and caring.
- It's also good to be able to offer a specific recommendation, such as Give an Hour.
- Avoid being judgmental or dismissive. Don't, for example, tell someone to "snap out of it."
- Even if you do everything right, the person in need of help may not respond, at least not right away. Keep trying.
- If you're still not able to get your loved one in for counseling, come by yourself.

### **What are some symptoms that I should be looking out for?**

- Recurrent nightmares
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Feeling distant from others
- Increased heart rate or sweating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling constantly "on guard"
- Being easily startled
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Talk of suicide or killing others

### **If I am not a mental health professional, can I help?**

- There are numerous opportunities to volunteer in other areas, such as outreach, education, marketing/public relations, and administration. Anyone wishing to learn more can contact [info@giveanhour.org](mailto:info@giveanhour.org).

### **If I am a mental health professional, how can I help?**

- If you are a licensed mental health professional, visit [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org) and click on "Register as a Provider" (in the top right portion of your screen) or "For Providers" (in the menu at left) and fill out the registration form. Providers' licensure is verified. Give an Hour providers must have medical malpractice insurance and follow the same standards of care as those in private practice and may only practice in areas in which they have expertise. Give an Hour does offer training so volunteers with an interest in expanding their areas of expertise can do so.



The launch of the new Military OneSource website format is receiving wonderful feedback. Thank you to those that have established virtual website demonstrations and topical webinars with your staff, military members, and/or families. From the demonstration's that have taken place, many have asked for information on how to link to the Military OneSource website. Attached for all is a flyer that exhibits the guidelines for your use. Please, remove this attachment before forwarding the following information to your service members and families. If you would like to schedule a virtual tour, please let me know how I can assist you and your military families.

Please pass the following information to your staff, service members and families.

---

Looking for adventure? Research paper topics? Repair manual? Tutoring, AudioBooks or just about anything? Look no further than the [Military OneSource DoD Digital Library](#). This service is available at no cost to service members and their families.

- Career Transitions will help you map your military experience to civilian jobs, write a resume and cover letter, participate in an interview simulation, find job announcements and more.
- The Morningstar Investment Research Center gives you information on stocks and mutual funds. You can visit the Investment Classroom to hone your investing skills, explore dozens of articles and videos to learn more about the ins and outs of the stock market, and much more.
- TumbleBook Cloud for Teens is a collection of eBooks and read-along chapter books, graphic novels, educational videos and audio books. Your teenager can highlight portions of a book and add notes, which can come in handy for homework assignments and studying.
- The Small Engine Repair Reference Center offers 410 reference books with original photos and illustrations of engines for motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, snow mobiles, boats, outdoor power equipment, tractors, generators and other small engines.

#### [Monthly Military OneSource eNewsletter](#)

- Building Your Family's Resilience
- Team Up to Prevent Violence
- Bullying: How to Identify and Address Peer Aggression
- New To The Military

#### **XXX**

Military OneSource now offers Personal Financial Counseling, Non-Medical Counseling and Health and Wellness Coaching through video counseling sessions. Connect with a financial expert or your own personal health and wellness coach without leaving your living room. No more excuses for positive change-this is just too easy!

These options make it beneficial for all service members and families to reach out to Military OneSource to address financial, health and family stress issues that may affect unit readiness.

**-Financial counseling** can assist you with creating a financial plan for any phase in your life. Learn what a financial plan is, how to best pay down your credit and start saving for your future whether it is college or retirement!

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/other-services-and-counseling?content\\_id=281433](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/other-services-and-counseling?content_id=281433)

**-Non-Medical Counseling** is confidential and can include issues such as relationships, parenting, stress relief and more. Non-medical counseling is available in person, over the phone, online and video.

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling>

**-What can Health and Wellness Coaching do for you?**

- Help you identify beliefs, values and vision and create an action plan to achieve your goals, eliminating roadblocks or barriers that stand in the way and celebrating your success.
- Partner with you to establish a vision, clear goals and action steps.
- Focus on weight management, fitness and nutrition, health condition management, stress management and other areas of life transition.
- Health coaches can meet up to one year per health and wellness issue.

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/specialty-consultation?content\\_id=282885](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/specialty-consultation?content_id=282885)

If you would like more information on Military OneSource resources and materials please let me know. And always, if there is anything else I can do for you, do not hesitate to contact me.

***Brenda Emerson***

Minnesota Military OneSource Consultant

Contractor

612-751-4290

[Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com](mailto:Brenda.emerson@militaryonesource.com)

[www.MilitaryOneSource.mil](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil)

1-800-342-9647

**MyPay to get 2015 IRS form 10957**

Do you know that myPay is the quickest way to get your 2015 IRS Form 1095? In fact, once it becomes available in myPay in late January, 2016, you will have the option to View, Print or Save your 1095 in PDF format. This will save you time in comparison to the U.S. Postal Service which will take approximately 7 - 10 business days for delivery.

myPay protects against identity theft and is more secure than regular mail by allowing you to access your tax statements securely online. Finally, myPay matches the industry standards for the highest level of encryption and security to protect all myPay users.

myPay also makes it convenient for you to switch from mail delivery to electronic. You can simply log into myPay and from the Main Menu select "Turn on/off Hard Copy of IRS Form 1095". Answer "Yes" to switch from "Electronic and Hard Copy" to "Electronic Only" for faster and safer electronic delivery. Click the link below to log into your myPay account: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

If you have questions about logging into myPay and/or making changes to your electronic elections in myPay, contact the DFAS Customer Care Center at 1-888-DFAS411 or 1-888-332-7411 option 5.

Please do not respond to this message. Replies to this message are routed to an unmonitored mailbox.

---

Delivered by Defense Finance and Accounting Service

## **M - Check Out the New Minnesota Veteran Benefits Brochure**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs serves by providing assistance to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Through the Benefits Division Veterans can access financial assistance, counseling, Veterans Preference and much more. Check out our new [brochure](#) or find out more by visiting our [Benefits and Resources page](#).



**XXX**



## **M - AUSA US Bank Veterans Event 10 September 2015 at Target Field.**

[Click here to register!](#)

### **Event Details**

In recognition of your service, veterans or active military members and their spouses are invited as our guest to our second annual conference for business owners and those interested in starting a veteran-owned business.

This **complimentary event** will feature two dynamic keynote speakers, and breakout sessions including:

- Websites and marketing
- How to become a Veteran-Owned business
- Financing solutions and best practices
- Effective sales and marketing training
- Networking & lunch with leading veteran business owners

### **Schedule**

**7:30am:** Registration, breakfast and vendor expo.

**8:00 - 9:00am:** Invocation, AM keynote session Erik Therwanger

Discover your ability to transform military training into a tool for dominating the civilian business world. Attendees will discover how to transform their businesses and their teams by using the leadership strategies learned during their military service. With an emphasis of creating a high level of inspiration, veterans will learn



how to create a culture for growth, success and camaraderie. Today's veteran business leaders will unleash the true potential in their teams!

**9:00am - Noon:** Breakout sessions guests will move into their selected track for workshops that will help them in which phase of business growth they are in.

### **Workshop Sessions**

#### **Track One**

- Starting a Business - Marketing and Sales - Obtaining Financing

#### **Track Two**

- Marketing and Sales - Company Benefits - Obtaining contracts with large companies and the government

**Noon - 1:30:** Lunch and keynote session with Richard Lett!

Reflections on a career in Scotland Yard's Royalty Protection Department. Richard led the protection of senior members of the British Royal Family and coordinated protection operations at major State and International Events; highlights include the Weddings of Prince Charles & Camilla 2005, Prince William & Katherine 2011; the 200 Year Commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005, and the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations in 2002 and in 2012. He also commanded the VIP protection operation during the London Olympics.

**1:30:** Vendor expo and Networking

Space is limited for this FREE event. US Bank is graciously hosting breakfast and lunch, you must register to attend. Duplicate tickets will not be honored. You must provide the names of each attendee. [Register today!](#)

### **New this Month at Military OneSource!**

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, Military OneSource launched a new redesigned website. The website design reflects information and feedback from users resulting in searching and moving through information better and faster than ever.

- Did you know having some stress is good for you? Unfortunately, having too much stress is what most people experience. You can find great ideas on managing stress or working with a Military OneSource Health and Wellness Coach. This is offered through a Specialty Consultation and you will be well on your way!

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-and-wellness/managing-stress?content\\_id=282384](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-and-wellness/managing-stress?content_id=282384)

Soon you may be getting ready for a new school year to start. Military OneSource offers resources from pre-school through college to prepare for the upcoming year. I have included two topics of interest this month from **Education & Employment**.

- **How to Build a Relationship With Your Child's School When You're in the Military.** It is important to inform the school you are a military service member and family and to be involved in your child's education. This article offers great ideas on being involved in K-12 school activities with your child.

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/education-and-employment/pre-k-12-education?content\\_id=280986](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/education-and-employment/pre-k-12-education?content_id=280986)

- **An Overview of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ensures all children with special needs have access to a free and appropriate public education and they have the necessary tools to meet their educational goals. This act governs how agencies provide services to eligible students.

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/education-and-employment/pre-k-12-education?content\\_id=282378](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/education-and-employment/pre-k-12-education?content_id=282378)

### **Folds of Honor: Military Scholarships for Spouses and their children.**

The **Folds of Honor** Foundation, founded by Major Dan Rooney, provides scholarships to the spouses and children of soldiers killed or disabled in service to our country....

Mission Statement

Honoring Their Sacrifice, Educating Their Legacy.

Of the one million-plus dependents adversely affected by deployments, nearly nine out of 10 do not qualify for federal scholarship assistance. Since 2007, the Folds of Honor has carried forth this singular, noble mission. To close the gap, providing educational support to spouses and children of America's fallen and wounded soldiers.

<https://www.foldsofhonor.org/>

**XXXX**

Combat Veteran Tax Credit Expires on Aug. 15

Combat veterans in Minnesota could miss out on hundreds of dollars of savings when the 2011 Combat Service Tax Credit expires.

Minnesota offers a tax credit for military service in a combat zone. The credit is worth \$120 for each month of service. After August 15, service that took place in 2011 will no longer be eligible for the credit.

Please help spread the word so every eligible veteran can claim their savings. If you know someone who may qualify, please forward them this update. Partial months of service count toward the credit.



Veterans must meet three qualifications for the 2011 combat zone military service tax credit:

- served in a combat zone or hazardous-duty zone in 2011.
- lived in Minnesota during time of service.
- received combat pay.

To claim the credit, simply fill out a 2011 Form M99, the Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone form. This form is available [here](#). Or contact my office for assistance.

Credits for 2012, 2013, and 2014 are available and do not expire this year.

**XXX**

**Military One Source**

- This month, Military OneSource is proud to announce confidential Peer-to-Peer Specialty Consultations. Peer consultants are veterans and military spouses who understand the unique challenges faced by currently serving members and families. Call Military OneSource today!
- Also new in July, Video Health and Wellness Coaching to our participants! This expansion of our current services offers participants the ability to see their coach in real time which can bring many benefits to the participant/coach interaction. We will continue to offer telephonic and web-based sessions.

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness?content\\_id=273682](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness?content_id=273682)

- Are you looking for ideas on smart shopping and healthy eating? Military OneSource Monthly Focus has information for you! Read this article and find more links for healthy shopping lists, food choices and much more.

[https://www.militaryonesource.mil/monthly-focus?content\\_id=268501](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/monthly-focus?content_id=268501)

- You can also check out all Morale Welfare and Recreation topics to include Blue Star Museums 2015, Military Lodging and Facilities and Get Stronger Together. These information articles and more are available to you through the website.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/mwr/making-the-most-of-mwr>

## **M - Joint Retiree Appreciation Day**

As we celebrate another great year in this land of the free and home of the brave; please be reminded that the **Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (26 SEP 2015)** is fast approaching.

This year's event will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

If you haven't registered for JRAD 2015 yet, **please consider doing so.**

**Be reminded that there will be NO mailings this year so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, associates, etc.** For this reason, it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

This year's registration form along with more information can be found on the JRAD website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrad/>

Early Bird Registration: A drawing will be held for: one night stay at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino for two; buffet for two; and concert tickets of your choice for two. Early Bird Registration must be received at Navy RAO by **August 14, 2015.**



*Call. Click. Connect.*

## **Military OneSource Program Overview**

Military OneSource is a Department of Defense-funded program providing comprehensive information on every aspect of military life at no cost to active duty, Guard and reserve (regardless of activation status) service members, and their families. Information includes, but is not limited to, deployment, reunion, relationship, grief, spouse employment and education, parenting and child care, and much more.

Military OneSource has policy and programmatic information, helpful resources, products, articles and tips on numerous topics related to military life. Services are available 24 hours a day by telephone and online. In addition to the website support, Military OneSource offers call center and online support for consultations on a number of issues such as spouse education and career opportunities, issues specific to families with a member with special needs, health coaching, financial support and resources.

Military OneSource also offers non-medical counseling services online, via telephone, or face to face. Eligible individuals may receive non-medical counseling addressing issues requiring short-term attention, including everyday stressors, deployment and reintegration concerns, parenting, grief and loss, and marital problems, as well as assistance with financial management, taxes, career services, health and wellness, and much more. This personalized support is available 24/7 no matter where you live or serve.

The Military OneSource website combines the best of the original site and the programmatic and policy information from MilitaryHOMEFRONT. The website includes search tools, social media applications, spouse and leadership blogs, informative podcasts and webinars. Service and family members have access to installation locators for education; finances; elder care; health and wellness; crisis support, and relocation. Materials and shipping are available at no cost to servicemembers and families. Simultaneous language interpretation and document translation are also available

Educational materials including booklets, CDs, DVDs, and downloadable materials can be ordered by phone or online. Topics include parenting and child care; deployment, return and reunion; education; finances; elder care; health and wellness; crisis support, and relocation. Materials and shipping are at no cost to servicemembers and families.

Call a Military OneSource Consultant now:

Call from the U.S.: 800-342-9647

En español llame al: 877-888-0727

TTY/TDD accessible: 866-607-6794

Call from overseas: 800-3429-6477 (Find access codes online)

Overseas collect: 703-253-7599 (Contact an international operator first)

## **Education Link**

Link to a website that is a good source of information regarding education and many other Army benefits listed by state - please visit and add it to your resource tool kit.

[http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Home/Benefit\\_Library/State\\_Territory\\_Benefits.html](http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Home/Benefit_Library/State_Territory_Benefits.html)

This site will be very helpful in identifying those states still needing to bring AR Soldiers in line with NG Soldiers when it comes to education **benefits**.



- **Give an Hour and Wounded Warrior Project Partnership**

WWP serves service members who have incurred a service-connected wound, injury, or illness of the mind, body, or spirit on or after September 11, 2001. WWP provides 18 programs including Project Odyssey™ and Family and Caregiver Support. Using an adventure learning program method, these retreats help Wounded Warriors and family members reach the following goals:

Recognize combat and operational stress and PTSD as invisible wounds of war

Find ways to connect with their peers and community

Learn about mental health resources in their area and how to get access to a therapist

Start behavioral health treatment

Start their journey to recovery

**Give an Hour providers participate in this exciting collaborative venture in two ways:**

Volunteer to attend a Project Odyssey or Family Support Retreat to provide psycho-education in individual and/or group formats, facilitate group discussions, conduct one-on-one consultations as needed with retreat attendees, and support warriors by participating in adventure activities. WWP will cover your travel expenses. In addition, Give an Hour will thank providers with an honorarium.

Volunteer to accept clients directly from the WWP retreats to enhance the continuity of care and maintain the warriors' momentum as they journey beyond combat stress.

*Currently we have no openings to accept new providers into this program.*

If you have experience working with military and veteran populations, have provided trauma treatment, and have an understanding of military culture and its impact on warriors and/or families, please contact Erin Timmermans, GAH Program Specialist, at [etimmermans@givenahour.org](mailto:etimmermans@givenahour.org) to inquire about opportunities to get involved in the future.

## **M - PetsLoyal2Vets**



PetsLoyal2Vets is a Veteran-run, nonprofit, outreach organization which connects therapy and companion dogs with U.S. military Veterans suffering from service related traumas.

PetsLoyal2Vets says that their mission is, “to connect disabled Minnesota Military Veterans diagnosed and treated for PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), or physical assault traumas with specially trained companion, therapy, and psychiatric service dogs.” The organization partners with supporting animal shelters,

breeders, and rescue organizations at no cost to the Veteran.

According to the policy research organization, RAND Corporation, in 2014 at least 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans were diagnosed with PTSD and/or depression, while 19 percent of Veterans may have been suffering from TBI. The VA defined PTSD as a type of anxiety that affects people who have experienced a particular traumatic event. Additionally, TBI is listed as the most common physical injury among Veterans who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan; about one half of all injuries were TBI due to explosion.

The VA reports that owning a dog can lift moods and reduce stress. In general, research has found that dogs can help people feel better by providing companionship. Also, dogs are a good reason to get out of the house, spend time outdoors, and meet new people.

PetsLoyal2Vets trains companion dogs, therapy dogs, and psychiatric service dogs. The organization defines a service dog as a working dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Similarly, psychiatric service dogs are dogs that assist their handler that suffers from a psychiatric disability. Psychiatric service dogs can help with conditions such as PTSD, Bipolar disorder, anxiety, severe depression, panic attacks, nightmares, phobias, and obsessive compulsive disorders.

The PetsLoyal2Vets' facility in Prior Lake is currently under renovation to better provide improved shelter and training areas for the dogs. Jeff LaBaron, Executive Director of PetsLoyal2Vets, said the organization is nearing the end of the Phase III 'Project Companion.' After renovations of the 4,800 square foot building are complete, they will have space for 40 to 50 dogs per year.

All Veteran candidates for this specialized program must have fulfilled VA Medical Center treatments prior to being connected with a dog. PetsLoyal2Vets repeatedly emphasizes that their dogs are not meant to replace professional medical care, but instead are to provide comfort and companionship to Veterans after they have been diagnosed with PTSD or TBI. Veterans participating in this program can be active duty, reservist, inactive reserve, Veteran, retired or disabled.

For more information, visit their [website](#).

## **M - Event Honoring All Military Family Members**

~Past and Present~

The Minnesota Military Family Tribute (MFT) will forever stand as a thank you to U.S. military Gold Star, Blue Star, and veteran family members.

You are invited to the MFT Dedication Ceremony!

Bring your family and friends. This event is free and open to the public.

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2015

Location: Minnesota State Capitol Mall

(In front of the Veterans Services Building between the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean War Memorial)

Time: 10 am – 2 pm

Formal program from 10 am to noon (featuring a new song written and debuted for military families by **The Lost Wheels**)

Free entertainment from noon to 2:00 pm

o Noon – 1 pm: Country Music Artist **Rockie Lynne**

o 1 – 2 pm: **The Steeles**

Food trucks on site with food available for purchase.

There will be limited seating available, so bring lawn chairs and blankets.



Parking: Centennial Parking Ramp

Located off Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul

(Go to <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/mdhparkinglotk.pdf> for a detailed map.

Or go to <http://mn.gov/admin/images/capitolvisitor.pdf> to locate light rail stations nearby).

For more details regarding the Tribute and to see pictures of the building of the MFT, please visit our web page at <http://militaryfamilytribute.org>.

Volunteers are needed for this event. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Dorothy Halverson at [dorothyhalv@me.com](mailto:dorothyhalv@me.com).

We hope to see you there!

### **M - Fellow Military Retiree and Spouse:**

The planning is well underway for this year's Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD) to be offered on Saturday, 26 SEP 2015. JRAD 2015 will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

An informative agenda on topics of interest and importance to retirees will be headlined by our Guest Speaker, former CIA Agent Michael Hurley. You won't want to miss his presentation.

Please note that, again this year, there will be NO mailings of registration forms. Instead we're asking you visit the JRAD website, print out the registration form, fill it in and mail it to Navy RAO. Then pass the word to all your retired military friends and associates. For this reason it is also vitally important to include your email address on your registration form and on the JRAD Survey Questionnaire on the day of the JRAD. We thank you in advance!

The JRAD 2015 registration form, along with more information, can be found on our website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrad/>

Early Bird Registration: A drawing will be held for: (1) One night stay for two at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino; (2) Buffet dinner for two; and (3) Concert tickets of your choice for two. Early Bird Registration must be received at NAVY RAO no later than August 14, 2015.

Regular Registration is required by September 11, 2015.

Thank you for your service and have a great Memorial Day.

See you on 26 SEP 2015!

The JRAD 2015 Committee

### **M - Eagles Healing Nest**

We are a non-profit organization committed to meeting the needs of our veterans, service members and their families who suffer from the invisible wounds of war. Our entire team is committed to meeting those needs.

501c3 # 46-0617435 MN Non-Profit # 499048700022

#### **Location:**

310 US Hwy 71 North PM

Sauk Centre, MN 56378

Main: (320) 351-6200 ANSWERED 24/7

Director: (320) 351-6201

Director's Cell: (218) 371-1570 ANSWERS 24/7

Fax: (320) 351-6202

<http://www.eagleshealingnest.com/default.html>

## Trust Vets

Trust Vets was founded by a long-time supporter of American Military Veterans, Joe Johnson. Unable to serve, Joe has absolute and unlimited passion in supporting the brave men and women who have served.

Our ambition is to drive business to the American Veterans. The Trust Vets Directory connects the public to Veterans in business in their communities. The Veteran Members of Trust Vets are additionally supported through outstanding networking opportunities, professional connections and relationships, a web directory profile, social media promotions and our Friend of Veterans program.

**We make it easy for Veterans to serve each other here at home, and for communities to serve their Veterans.**

Today, Trust Vets has created hundreds of success stories for American Military Veterans, and are seeking additional Veterans to join our efforts and start new chapters across America.

<http://www.trustvets.com/>



**Heroes Linked is an online resource that gives Veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses personal, phone-based professional development mentoring with private sector professionals. Heroes Linked is a project of the non-profit, non-partisan Military and Veterans Appreciation Trust Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) organization. <http://www.mvat.org/heroes-linked/>**

### **M** - HIRING OUR HEROES (February 12, 2015)

Hiring Our Heroes is hosting a job fair for veteran job seekers, active duty military members, guard and reserve members, and military spouses at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul. Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities.

Thursday, February 12, 2015  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Excel Energy Center  
199 West Kellogg Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

► **Job Seekers, Employers, and Service Organizations: Click here to register.**

*Why register? Job seekers can upload their resumes to be viewed by employers ahead of the event.*

If you have any other questions, please visit our **FAQ page** or email [hiringourheroes@uschamber.com](mailto:hiringourheroes@uschamber.com).

## **Hiring Our Heroes Employment Workshop**

The Hiring Our Heroes employment workshop consists of a classroom session beginning an hour and a half prior to the hiring fair. This will be followed one-on-one mentoring sessions with all pre-registered and walk-in participants to be conducted throughout the day. Mentoring sessions focus on resume building; resume writing, and interviewing techniques for all job-seeking veterans and service member participants.

► **Must register as a job seeker above.**

*This Minnesota Wild sponsored hiring event is being conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, Hiring Minnesota Heroes, the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, Goodwill Industries International, California Employment Development Department, NBC News, and other local partners.*

Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, launched in March 2011 as a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities. Working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's vast network of state and local chambers and strategic partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, our goal is to create a movement across America in hundreds of communities where veterans and military families return every day.

Through our commitment-based engagement of the business community, more than 825 job fairs held across the country, and a suite of free online career tools, we've worked with our partners to help hundreds of thousands of veterans and military spouses find jobs.

## **M - Welcome to HeroCare**

Many veterans experience psychological wounds after their service has ended. Such illnesses can strain veterans and their families physically, mentally and financially. HeroCare offers the care and resources necessary for healing and recovery.

### **Specialized mental health care for veterans**

HeroCare was designed to meet the unique needs of veterans who are recovering from the psychological effects related to service. Regardless of your age or military experience, we can help. We offer services while you're hospitalized or as part of our partial hospitalization program. We'll also connect you with valuable resources in your community for continued support for you and your family.

### **Inpatient services - care while you're hospitalized**

If you're hospitalized for symptoms of a mental illness, you may need specialized care and support to recover. We'll work with you while you are in the hospital to identify and treat your mental wounds, including:

- Evaluating your symptoms
- Diagnosing your illness
- Starting therapy based on evidence-based care
- Assisting with medication management
- Creating a personalized plan for after you leave the hospital

### **Lee and Penny Anderson HeroCare for Veterans**

As a veteran, you're real hero. You've put your life on the line for our freedom. In the process, you may have experienced troublesome or traumatic situations. HeroCare can help you recover. 2478 (3/14) ©2014 HealthPartners

**DayBridge - partial hospitalization services**

DayBridge is for adults who need intensive therapy during the day but can return home at night and on the weekends. We focus on your personal strengths to start or continue the recovery process. We are here to help you with:

- Reducing your stress
- Using your strength and resources for healing
- Developing effective ways to handle difficult thoughts, feelings or behaviors
- Learning to resolve problems and cope with current and future stresses

DayBridge is located at Regions Hospital (northeast section) in an area specially designed for healing and comfort. Patients attend five days a week from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.

**Support services - helping veterans and their families thrive**

Mental health conditions can significantly impact a veteran's family. We want you to do more than recover from the psychological effects of service, we want you to thrive. Our HeroCare advocate, who is also a veteran, will assist you and your family in connecting with community resources, including:

- Financial assistance
- Housing assistance
- Employment assistance
- Family counseling
- Other community resources, including the Minneapolis VA Health Care System

**The HeroCare team**

Regions Hospital is a leader in providing mental health services. We incorporate the latest techniques in treatment to help our patients adapt to their new illnesses. Our coordinated care team includes a HeroCare advocate along with professionals from the following disciplines:

- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Nursing
- Social Work
- Occupational therapy
- Nutritional Health
- Music therapy
- Chaplaincy

We are also supported by a full-service, Level I trauma center to provide for any additional health needs.

**For more information**

We welcome most health plans and self-payment. If you're interested in learning more about HeroCare for you or a loved one, please contact us at **651-254-6635** or **651-254-6655 (fax)**. Information is also available at **regionshospital.com**.

**Healthcare professionals:** For information, please contact our HeroCare advocate at **651-254-6635**.

640 Jackson Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
[regionshospital.com](http://regionshospital.com)  
651-254-6635

[http://www.regionshospital.com/ucm/groups/public/@hp/@public/@rgns/@cont/@sp/@mental/documents/documents/centrb\\_042760.pdf](http://www.regionshospital.com/ucm/groups/public/@hp/@public/@rgns/@cont/@sp/@mental/documents/documents/centrb_042760.pdf)

---

**The Fry Scholarship for Surviving Children is Now Extended to Surviving Spouses**

The Fry Scholarship is an amendment to the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include the children of service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. Effective January 1, 2015 the Fry Scholarship expanded eligibility to surviving spouses of service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

Eligible beneficiaries attending school may receive:

- Full tuition & fees paid directly to the school for all public school in-state students. For those attending private or foreign schools tuition & fees are capped at a statutory maximum amount per academic year.
- A monthly housing allowance
- A books & supplies stipend

According to [Military.com](http://Military.com), “The Fry Scholarship was created to honor the memory of Marine Gunnery Sergeant John D. Fry, 28, of Lorena, Texas. With only a week left in his Iraq tour in 2006, Fry injured his hand and was given the option of going home early with a Bronze Star. Fry declined the offer and volunteered to go on one last run to defuse bombs. Fry was killed March 8, 2006, by an improvised explosive device in Anbar province, Iraq, leaving behind his widow and three small children.”

When I became a surviving spouse at the age of 44, our children were 10 and 13. As I look back 10 years past that time, I am not only reminded of our loss, but of the loss of many during that time and the years since. I remember going to many memorial services at Ft. Hood, for the 4th Infantry Division soldiers killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom 1. I often wonder what paths those young surviving spouses have taken as they have navigated life without their loved one beside them. I hope those surviving spouses I remember from the memorial services and those who have become surviving spouses since will go to the VA’s website to look at their options.

As I continued to live life and raise our children in a manner in which I hope would make my husband proud, one of my top concerns was funding their college education. Fortunately, my daughter was able to benefit from the Fry Scholarship. It was not an easy task filling out the application and working with her college. I remember initially, there were many calls made to the educational advisors at the VA. At the time, it was a new benefit and as with most new programs there were growing pains. The educational advisors always first and foremost extended their condolences for our loss. I remember sitting at the computer with my daughter, assisting her with the application and having to make several calls to the VA to ensure that we were filling out the application correctly. It took us a while to fill out the application but I cannot emphasize enough persistence and follow through. If the answer to a question does not make sense to you, call back.

The Fry Scholarship has benefitted our family immensely. I hope this expansion will help surviving spouses who might have been holding back on continuing their education due to the expense.

For more information on the Fry Scholarship please go to:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/factsheets/fry\\_scholarship.pdf](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/factsheets/fry_scholarship.pdf)

**M - Veteran C.O.R.E.**

## Strengthening military families

Free, confidential and caring professional support is available for Veterans and their families.

The LSS C.O.R.E. Program (Case Management, Outreach, Referral & Education) is offered statewide. Clients receive an individualized plan of action to access a broad range of wellness services:

---

***For individuals:*** Build on your own strengths to deal with situations of all kinds: anger and stress management, feelings of guilt, sadness or depression, fear or anxiety, intimacy issues, trauma, integration, addictions, financial counseling, and more.

---

***For couples:*** Counseling and support for couples dealing with stress, anxiety, intimacy, or communication issues within their unique relationship.

---

***For children:*** Specialized “strength-based” counseling and support including play therapy, to help children, parents and caregivers identify and improve the child's or adolescent's well-being.

---

***For families:*** Deployment and reintegration support for Veterans, debt management and bankruptcy counseling, family counseling, and more.

---

### **Services are free and confidential.**

We strive to remove all barriers to help you receive the support you need. If necessary, we can take care of co-pays and deductibles. If your situation is complex or your access to service locations is limited, we can come to you or provide in-home care.

**You're not alone, call today.**

**1-888-881-8261**

Counseling services, resources and referrals available through C.O.R.E. include:

- Individual, Family & Couples Counseling
- Assessment, Counseling and Trauma-based, Best Practice Care
- Deployment and Reintegration Support for Veterans
- Budget and Debt Management Counseling
- Anger and Stress Management
- Resources and Referrals
- Support Groups

C.O.R.E. is a joint partnership with the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs and Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS). Office locations are available throughout Minnesota with professional mental health counselors offering flexible services when and where you need them most. Services are confidential and free. Call us, we're here for you!

**LSS Home or [www.minnesotaveteran.org](http://www.minnesotaveteran.org)**

Call **1-888-881-8261** anytime.

Links to other websites and resources that may be helpful to you and your family:



- [Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [Listing of County Veterans Service Officers \(CVSO\)](#)
- [Beyond the Yellow Ribbon](#)
- [Blue Star Mother's of America](#)
- [Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#)
- <http://www.lssmn.org/veterans/>

XXXX

**M - Annual Holes for Hero's Ice Event**

Registration [www.fishingforlife.org](http://www.fishingforlife.org) or click:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-holes-for-heroes-ice-fishing-tournament-tickets-12918243815>

**Our Holes For Hero's Ice fishing event** is on Jan 31st on Medicine Lake. This event serves the general public but emphasizes bringing Military families and general public together. We host a live broadcast via Internet that brings overseas service member and kid together in our special "hole of honor"(see pictures below). Last year we had 35 military families connecting to a parent, son or daughter live, via this internet stream. All proceeds from this event serve The JROTC Cadets in Minneapolis. This great organization directly helps kids in inner-city who are making decisions to participate in the inner city Military and straighten out their lives.

**Tom Goodrich** [Goodykstp@aol.com](mailto:Goodykstp@aol.com)

**Executive Director Fishing for Life 612-987-5466**

[www.fishingforlife.org](http://www.fishingforlife.org)

**M - 30 Days Foundation**



Ask. Action. Relief.

Because We've All Been There.

The 30-Days Foundation celebrates the simple act of kindness by providing a one-time financial grant for people in real-life financial and personal crisis. The donation from our foundation is made payable only to the service provider that requires payment. Since 2011, we have helped over 5000 families and it is our goal to help thousands more each year.

The 30-Days Foundation assists people with everyday needs. Needs that when aren't able to be kept up because of un-for seen circumstances, or injuries, or employment lay-off's, etc, can pile up and cause considerable burden to parents and children of any family. The 30-Days Foundation provides the

opportunity, when funds are available, to stop the momentum of bad things happening and give people the chance to catch their breath and take care of things.

We assist people with these types of issues:

**\*First Month Rent and Security Deposits**

**\*Gift Cards for Groceries, Fuel or Department Store Needs (From the specific stores, not pre-paid cards)**

**\*Medical Bills**

**\*Utility Bills of all kinds**

**\*School Supplies**

**\*Emergency Shelter for Families in Abuse Situations**

**\*Moving Fees**

**and more**

The 30-Days Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization, **EIN 27-3971655** that is based in the Twin Cities, but can be national in its reach. We can do that because everything we do is online and the needs that we provide are needs that are in need of attention to anyone around the country.

Why is it called The 30-days Foundation? Because within 30 days you will know one way or the other if we have funds available to help you.

The 30-Days Foundation assists people in real-life financial crisis with a one-time financial grant made payable **ONLY** to the service provider.

The 30-Days Foundation depends solely on donations from individuals and companies. Help us help others in need.

**Mick Sterling | Founder**

<http://www.the30-daysfoundation.org>.

**XXXX**

**M - CSOAF 'Citizens Supporting Our Armed Forces'**

Mission statement:

CSOAF is a 100% Volunteer organization supporting Deployed or Active Soldiers (any branch) and their Families.

**Goal:**

Our goal is to send needed items to our troops as often and to as many as possible, all our resources come from donations and fundraising.

**CSOAF's pledge**

Though we support all of our Armed Forces, Our primary commitment is to the Army National Guard **34<sup>th</sup>**

**"Red Bull" Infantry Division** and their families

The objective of this organization is

- Fundraising; for the purchase and postage of needed items shipped to our deployed soldiers
- Donation drives to acquire items needed for shipment
- Packaging and distribution of said items to our troops
- Give aid and Support to the families of our deployed Soldiers upon request
- Work with or through other groups (partial list)
  - o Military family affairs

- o Blue Star Mother (BSM)
- o Blue Star Families (BSF)
- o Beyond the Yellow Ribbon (BYTR)
- o America Supporting Americans (ASA ‘Adopt a Unit Program’)
- o Tribute To The Troops (TTTT)
- o American Legion; Legion Riders; VFW; Wreaths For The Fallen
- o Other non-military groups, Lions; Chamber of Commerce

Background information:

Our organization has been in operation for 7 years, in conjunction with the care packages we work with other orgs such as County CVO, Veterans Affairs, Yellow Ribbon and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, Blue Star Mothers, American Legion, etc. to assist with any needs of the deployed soldier’s family here at home.

website: <http://csoaf.com>

Bob Schule (Co-Chairman)

CSOAF ‘Citizens Supporting Our Armed Forces Inc. 651-462-5539

[cheffman@frontiernet.net](mailto:cheffman@frontiernet.net)

## 5 Reasons Why You Should Use SchoolQuest’s™ Scholarship Finder!

09.30.2014, by Susan Conolly

09/27/2014 Published by: Suzanne

Getting accepted into college isn’t the only hurdle that prospective higher-education students face. **Paying for college** is a growing concern. Google “Student Debt Statistics” and you’ll find some pretty alarming numbers! What if a student could attend a college or university without taking on a large amount of debt in the first place? **This is where SchoolQuest™ comes in!**

The [Military Child Education Coalition’s® \(MCEC’s®\)](#) SchoolQuest™ website initiative is here to help military-connected students clear this hurdle! Designed for college-bound high school students (and their parents) to search for undergraduate funding, [SchoolQuest’s™ Scholarship Finder](#) is ready and waiting.

### Here are 5 reasons why you should check it out! . . .

College is Expensive! (If you Google "Student Debt Statistics" as suggested above, you'll see just how much money can be involved.)

It’s **FREE** to Military-Connected High-School Students and members of [MCEC's® Student 2 Student® program](#) seeking undergraduate funding.

Searches result in a comprehensive list of reputable undergraduate scholarships.

Results are personalized to each student.

Powered by Reference Service Press (RSP) "the leading authority on scholarships", this service offers thousands of funding opportunities which represent billions of dollars!

### **How does it work? . . .**

Students and/or parents set up a password protected account through a link under the "My SchoolQuest Account" section of [SchoolQuest's™ home page](#). They then complete a brief questionnaire to determine various scholarship eligibilities resulting in a list of matches. (A "Help me choose" link is available to those who need assistance in determining the best answers for their situation.)

While reviewing the list of matches, users are able to decide whether or not to save each one for future reference. **The entire results list is saved even after you log out so you can review the list at your convenience.**

Remember that users have the option of getting one set of scholarship matches, printing them, and then editing the criteria in one or more areas in order to get a new set of matches. **Our goal is to offer to you the greatest amount of funding opportunities available.**

ALL awards are "portable funding" meaning they can be used at numerous colleges and universities. RSP updates these programs on an ongoing basis, but at any one time there are **40,000 or more unique opportunities** described!

As the saying goes, "There's no time like the present", so come on over to SchoolQuest™ to get started! If you have questions, comments or corrections for the SchoolQuest™ web site we want to hear from you! **Please send an email to: [SchoolQuest@MilitaryChild.org](mailto:SchoolQuest@MilitaryChild.org)**

\*When researching how to pay for a college education, contacting the Financial Aid Offices of the schools you're interested in attending is a good idea as well. Read our blog "[Financial Aid Questions – Ask Financial Aid Officers!](#)" to learn more about this approach, and for **a list of questions to ask!**

\*\*Help us get the word out about [SchoolQuest.org™](#) by liking us on Facebook! [SchoolQuest.org™](#) is an initiative of the [Military Child Education Coalition® \(MCEC®\)](#). Follow us on the [MCEC® Twitter feed](#) . . . **for the sake of the child!**

- See more at: [http://www.militarychild.org/blog/5-reasons-why-you-should-use-schoolquests-scholarship-finder?utm\\_source=MCEC+eReaders&utm\\_campaign=1c6b8e5527-MCEC\\_E\\_News\\_September\\_2014&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1878a87820-1c6b8e5527-60121617#sthash.ms639hUO.JZW9HcBZ.dpuf](http://www.militarychild.org/blog/5-reasons-why-you-should-use-schoolquests-scholarship-finder?utm_source=MCEC+eReaders&utm_campaign=1c6b8e5527-MCEC_E_News_September_2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1878a87820-1c6b8e5527-60121617#sthash.ms639hUO.JZW9HcBZ.dpuf)

XXX

### **M - \*Free Veterans Symposium:**

#### **THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF STARTING AND RUNNING A VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS**

17 September 11AM - 7PM

Keynote speaker, [Patrick Hanlon](#), will share insights on Primal Branding beginning at 12:30. Hanlon is ceo and founder of THINKTOPIA, a global strategic and brand transformation practice for Fortune 100 companies as well as startups. Hanlon is a contributor to *Forbes Inc* magazine and Advertising Age. He has been featured or quoted in Fast Company, Business Week Online, Entrepreneur and NPR.

[Click here for free registration -- space is limited...](#)

Printable flyer here... [images.magnetmail.net/images/clients/AUSA/attach/VetBusinessSymposium.pdf](http://images.magnetmail.net/images/clients/AUSA/attach/VetBusinessSymposium.pdf)

XXX

## **M - New Program Offers Free Hotel Accommodations for Military Veterans Searching for Jobs in Minnesota**

On July 8 Hilton Hotels in Minnesota joined three other states in a new program that provides accommodations to Veterans searching for jobs outside of their residential area. Hilton Worldwide and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) have partnered with the state of Minnesota to assist military Veterans with finding fulfilling jobs. The HHonors Military program was designed to give back to military service personnel through providing HHonors points to eligible transitioning service members, Veterans, and military spouses. By becoming a HHonors Military member, Veterans will receive a 100,000 point donation to their account. These points can be redeemed to support travel expenses related to job-search activities.

In addition to Veterans searching for employment, the new program also covers those attending job interviews, skill training, or looking for new housing in Minnesota. Veterans are eligible for up to three free nights at Hilton hotels in our state, a \$600 value. Enrolling in the program requires Veterans to contact their local Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP). To find your representative, visit [the DEED website](#). Once enrolled, Veterans may create a HHonors account by visiting [JoinHHonors.com](#) or calling 1-800-HHonors.

“This program is an opportunity to show our support for Minnesota’s military Veterans and thank them for their service,” said Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). “Looking for a job can be costly, and this effort will help offset some of the expenses that Veterans face when they travel outside their home regions for job opportunities.”

“Hilton Worldwide has been strongly committed to supporting military Veterans and their families since our founding nearly a century ago by Conrad Hilton, a U.S. Army Veteran who served in World War I,” said Rodney Moses, vice president of global recruitment for Hilton. “We are proud to have partnered with NASWA and look forward to working with the state of Minnesota as they launch this exciting Hilton HHonors program.”

HHonor Points accrued from the program can be used to make reservations either online at [HHonors.com](#), or by contacting your local Hilton Reservations Center at 1-800-HHonors. Points never expire, and can be used at any Hilton brand hotel.

XXX

## **M - THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF STARTING AND RUNNING A VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS**

17 September 11AM - 7PM

This free event will feature:

- Business Planning & Market Research
  - Basic Accounting
  - Websites & Social Media
  - Financing and finance alternatives
  - Legal considerations of starting a business
  - Networking & Lunch with veteran business owners
- [Click here for free registration -- space is limited...](#)

Printable flyer here... [images.magnetmail.net/images/clients/AUSA/attach/VetBusinessSymposium.pdf](http://images.magnetmail.net/images/clients/AUSA/attach/VetBusinessSymposium.pdf)

## **2014 U.S. Military Retired Handbook**

Published by Military Handbooks, FREE Military Handbooks and Guides Since 2001

---

Copyright © 2001-2014. Military Handbooks, 7200 NW 86th Street, Kansas City, MO 64153. Military Handbooks Web site: <http://militaryhandbooks.com/>. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the Publisher. Printed in the U.S.A.

“This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is published with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.”— *From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a committee of the American Bar Association and a committee of publishers and associations.*

Go to <http://militaryhandbooks.com/> to sign up for your FREE Military Handbooks today!

## **M - Disaster Relief Grants Available for Minnesota Veterans and Families**

Veterans, their families, and surviving spouses may be eligible for a disaster relief grant of up to \$1,000 if they have not received other state or federal assistance.

As a result of recent flooding and storms, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is offering Disaster Relief Grants for reimbursable expenses to Veterans in Beltrami, Blue Earth, Brown, Dodge, Faribault, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Hubbard, Jackson, Lake of the Woods, Le Sueur, Lyon, Koochiching, McLeod, Morrison, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pipestone, Ramsey, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock, Roseau, Saint Louis, Scott, Sibley, Steele, Todd, and Waseca , per the Governor’s Emergency Executive Order 14-11.

Veterans and their families should contact their respective County Veteran Service Office (CVSO) to apply for a Disaster Relief Grant, or call 1-888-LINKVET (546-5838) for assistance finding the location and phone number of their CVSO.

Original receipts for expenditures must be dated no earlier than June 11, 2014 and no later than August 31, 2014. MDVA must receive all completed applications and receipts with a postmarked date no later than September 30, 2014.

## **M -\*\*Gold Star Family Weekend at Camp Ripley 22-24 August 2014\*\***

GSFW’s Mission is:

Honor their Service

Remember their Sacrifice,

Cherish our freedom.

Our weekend is a special time for families to share the memories of their fallen loved one with others who have been there and understand. At past events, Vietnam and Korea families have been given love and support from our current Iraq/Afghanistan families and the current families have learned that we can endure.

Your family is invited to be our guests at the Gold Star Family Weekend to be held at Camp Ripley, just North of Little Falls, Minnesota. The event this year will be the weekend of August 22-24, 2014. We ask for a small registration fee, which will be returned at check-in.

You are welcome to join us for our Friday dinner and sharing event followed by a special concert by Rockie Lynne. Saturday will be a day of events on the base from canoeing, to the indoor rifle range, or museums – whatever you would enjoy. Join us for one day or the whole weekend!

For more details, please see our website: [www.GoldStarWeekend.com](http://www.GoldStarWeekend.com).



In honor and remembrance,

Merrilee Carlson - *Shrek's Mom*  
President, Gold Star Family Weekend, Inc.  
Mother of Sgt. Michael "Shrek" Carlson, 1/24/2005 Iraq  
[Merr.Carlson@gmail.com](mailto:Merr.Carlson@gmail.com)  
Phone 651 319-1194

XXX

### **M - Fellow Military Retiree:**

The planning for this year's Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD) is well under way for **27 SEP 2014**. This year's event will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

**Please note that there will be NO mailings again this year so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, associates, etc.** For this reason, it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

This year's registration form along with more information can be found on our website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrad/>

Early Bird Registration: A drawing will be held for: one night stay at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino for two; buffet for two; and concert tickets of your choice for two. Early Bird Registration must be received at Navy RAO by **August 15, 2014**.

**Regular Registration is required by Sep 12th, 2014.**

### **JRAD 2014 Committee**

XXXX

### **USAA TRANSITION ADVICE AND TOOLS**

USAA is closely following the news regarding the planned reduction of armed forces personnel. More than half of those leaving the military are USAA members, and I am writing to let you know some of the ways USAA is helping our fellow veterans transition to civilian life.

#### **TRANSITION ADVICE AND TOOLS**

We have specially trained transition advisors - many of whom are veterans themselves - prepared to detect and respond to members who might be facing separation or an early retirement. We also have helpful online tools available at [usaa.com/LeavingtheMilitary](http://usaa.com/LeavingtheMilitary) or in the [Leaving the Military](#) section under Military Life on USAA mobile:

- The **Military Separation Assessment Tool** provides estimated cost-of-living comparisons between military and civilian pay across different cities.
- The **Military Separation Checklist** helps guide service members through the steps of separation, starting up to 24 months in advance.

- A comprehensive, free **Leaving the Military Guide** is available for download.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

You may recall the challenges you faced when you left the military, and there's a way you and I can make things easier for family members and friends who are about to transition to civilian life. Please share these links to our online tools and let them know that USAA representatives are standing by to help.

Thank you, as always, for your membership, your service to our nation, and your support for our fellow veterans.

Sincerely,

Josue (Joe) Robles Jr.

Major General, USA (Ret.)

President and Chief Executive Officer

## **TUDOR.COM HELPS CHILD WITH ALGEBRA:**

A Soldier in the 412th Theater Engineer Command was having difficulty providing Algebra instruction for his child. The Soldier explained, "I just could not remember how to do mixed fractions. I could get the answers on my iPhone but it did not show the steps." A USARC CYSS specialist shared "TUTOR.COM" as a resource for him. The Soldier registered and his children received the help they needed immediately. The Soldier later shared: "everybody else wanted to charge for tutoring services." I am so glad that AR CYSS was there to refer a resource to me and assist my children." The Soldier was even happier a live person was reached at "TUTOR.COM" and able to share steps involved to solve mixed fraction algebraic expressions.

[www.tutor.com](http://www.tutor.com)

**XXX**

**M - iWarriors**

The mission of iWarriors is to honor severely injured members of the Fifth Marines by providing them with personalized iPads. With help from members of the American Mold Builders Association, MoldMaking Technology Magazine, and others, our vision is to expand these and other gifts to severely injured service members of all branches of the Armed Forces.

Phone: (651) 303-4409 or (651) 303-4408

Email: [info@iwarriors.org](mailto:info@iwarriors.org)

<http://www.iwarriors.org/>

**XXX**

**Joint Forces Support - Supporting Our Nation One Community at a Time**

Joining Community Forces expands on First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Biden's "[Joining Forces](#)" campaign by focusing attention on community-level efforts to support Service members, Military Families and Veterans.

### **What are Community Forces?**

Community Forces focus the efforts of local providers with a common goal: to strengthen the local military community. Because Community Forces work in communities around the country, they are uniquely positioned to find and consolidate the best local resources, and that means providing better and faster assistance to Service members, Military families, and veterans when they need it.

This web site provides seven assistance areas for Soldiers and their Families:

- Reintegration YRRP
- Career ESGR & H2H
- Family
- Finances
- Behavioral Health
- Sexual Assault Prevention
- Transition Support

[www.JointServicesSupport.org](http://www.JointServicesSupport.org)

### **M - Annual Holes for Hero's ice fishing event. This is a great event for kids, families and fathers overseas too!**

We make it super simple for all vets and families to participate, Its free, we drill holes, heated shelters, free fishing gear, guides on the ice to help, holes drilled and, The tournament will be simulcast to Iraq & Afghanistan so that personnel currently serving overseas can watch their family & friends while they fish. The link to register is at : [fishingforlife.org](http://fishingforlife.org) any questions or concerns, contact me at Event Details Join us for a fun ice fishing contest honoring the Armed Forces who have served our country, and their families who have sacrificed along with them. There will be great prizes, food, and fun activities for kids....not to mention great fishing!

The Holes for Heroes Ice Fishing Tournament will take place on Saturday, February 1 from 1-4 pm at Medicine Lake in Plymouth.

#### **Registration**

Advance registration is just \$5 per person. Same-day registration (walk-up) is just \$10. Your registration helps provide free fishing opportunities for men & women who have served our country.

Military personnel and their immediate families (spouse and children) can register in advance or day-of at **no charge**.

Online registration & advanced ticket sales will end on Friday, Jan 31 at 6 pm.

#### **Simulcast to Iraq & Afghanistan**

The tournament will be simulcast to Iraq & Afghanistan so that personnel currently serving overseas can watch their family & friends while they fish. Advance registration is REQUIRED for those who wish to participate in the simulcast, so that we can coordinate timing and logistics and your military

friend or family member can be positioned to participate. Contact [brenda@fishingforlife.org](mailto:brenda@fishingforlife.org) to inquire about the simulcast.

### **Prizes**

Over \$2,000 in prizes including Frabill StormSuit, Aqua-View, HT Auger Set, Dicks Sporting Goods cards, Ice Hunter combo. Category prizes plus random drawings throughout the day. See [www.fishingforlife.org](http://www.fishingforlife.org) for details, which will be posted by January 1, 2014.

### **Rules**

Tournament rules will be posted on [www.fishingforlife.org](http://www.fishingforlife.org) and emailed to all registered participants by January 1, 2014.

### **Inclement Weather and/or Unsafe Ice Conditions**

If weather or ice conditions are questionable, visit [www.fishingforlife.org](http://www.fishingforlife.org) to find out whether the tournament will take place. Notice will be posted by 6 am Day of Tournament. In the event of cancellation, no refunds will be issued.

### **Sponsorships, Prize Donations & Volunteer Opportunities**

If you are interested in getting involved as a sponsor, volunteer, or donor of a door prize, please contact Tom at 612-987-5466 or email [info@fishingforlife.org](mailto:info@fishingforlife.org).

Have questions about 2014 Holes for Heroes Ice Fishing Tournament? [Contact Fishing for Life.org](http://www.fishingforlife.org)  
*Bad Spellers of the World...UNTIE !!*

Tom Goodrich [Goodykstp@aol.com](mailto:Goodykstp@aol.com)  
Exec Dir Fishing for Life  
612-987-5466  
[fishingforlife.org](http://fishingforlife.org)

**XXX**

### **"Battle Buddy," an Android App**

"Battle Buddy," an Android App developed by the Army Reserve Chaplain's office is an interactive tool for intervention, awareness, and prevention of suicide and sexual harassment/Assault. It is available now for Android and will be available for iPhone in 3-6 weeks.

The Army Reserve announces the release of "Battle Buddy" an Android App developed by the Army Reserve Chaplain's office and designed as an interactive tool for intervention, awareness, and prevention of suicide and sexual harassment/Assault.

This app helps you be a good Battle Buddy by giving you the tools and information needed to assist your buddy during a crisis. It also provides tips and tools to help you intervene before the situation reaches crisis proportions. The app is organized into two primary areas, "My Buddies" and "My Resources".

MY BUDDIES contains quick links and tips to use if you must act or intervene in a crisis. It also provides detailed intervention, awareness and prevention information concerning the Army's suicide prevention program and Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program.

- The "Get Help Now" tab opens up a set of options that allows you to use your phone to call for additional help.
- The "Suicide Intervention" tab walks you through the Army's ACE process along with access to additional resources.
- The "SHARP" tab walks you through how to seek help, the reporting process and provides tips to help prevent becoming a victim. Links to additional resources provide additional support and information.
- The "Talking Points" tab provides helpful tools and tips to help you be a better listener for someone who just needs a friend to talk to.

MY RESOURCES consists of a resource library with links and information on a variety of programs and services that are available to Soldiers and their Families. You will find a wealth of information on benefits, entitlements, educational opportunities, financial resources and other information organized conveniently, and easy to navigate right at your fingertips via your smart phone. These resources are divided into National Resources and access to a database of local resources.

Under the "Reading List" tab you will find the Army Chief of Staff's reading list, the NCO reading list and a link to the MWR Library which provides access to an incredible amount of information.

The "Other" tab provides information on My Medical, Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness, Family Programs, Public Affairs tips and how to request legal assistance from the nearest Army Legal Assistance Office. Battle Buddy for iPhone will be available in 3-6 weeks.

To get Battle Buddy now, click on this Google Play link:  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=mil.army.battlebuddy>

### **Survivor Outreach Services**

The [Survivor Outreach Services](#) (SOS) program is a "One Army" Program that serves as the long-term support portion of the overall Army casualty continuum of care. From very early on in the casualty process, active Army, [Army National Guard](#) and [United States Army Reserve](#) support coordinators and financial counselors work together as an integrated team to provide dedicated and comprehensive support services to all surviving family members, regardless of service component, cause, or location of death. SOS honors their sacrifice and assures survivors that they remain part of the Army family for as long as they desire.

### **What has the Army done**

Available in all 54 states/territories, Europe and the Pacific, SOS support coordinators and financial counselors provide services through active case management and are advocates for survivors.

- **Support Coordinators:** assess needs, coordinate services and events, ensure benefits and entitlements milestones are tracked, facilitate non-clinical support groups and provide information and referral services. Support coordinators also develop partnerships with other organizations to assist and leverage support for survivors (i.e., Behavioral Health Clinics/providers, Military Family Life Consultants, Department of Human Services, Vet Centers, Social Security Administration, local churches, etc) to maximize available resources and ensure that identified needs are met.

- **Financial Counselors:** are committed to assisting survivors in creating financial independence and ensuring they have the information and confidence needed to make sound financial decisions. Financial counselors provide education on investing, estate planning, tax issues and assist in establishing long term financial goals. They further offer professional level services addressing money management issues (i.e., tax considerations, advanced directives, wills, etc) because of their familiarity with survivor entitlements and the associated tax implications.

### **What efforts does the Army have planned for the future?**

As the Army's official program, SOS embraces and reassures survivors that they are continually linked to the Army family for as long as they desire. Therefore, SOS services have no expiration date and survivors can access the program at any time a need arises. SOS will remain a resource for survivors and continue to evolve services to meet their needs.

### **Why is this important to the Army?**

Nothing reflects the Army's dedication to those who have given the ultimate sacrifice than the service and care for their families left behind. SOS fulfills the Army's commitment to survivors and honors the legacy of their fallen loved one.

### **Resources:**

- [Survivor Outreach Services](#)
- [U.S. Army Installation Management Command](#)
- Army.mil: [Army Families](#)
- Army.mil: [Gold Star Mothers](#)
- [SOS on Facebook](#)
- SOS toll-free number (1-855-707-2769)
- Related STAND-TO!
- [Army Family Action Plan](#)

### **New Go-to Place for Veteran Benefits**

VA offers benefits that can improve the lives of Veterans and their families. Some benefits may also be available to active-duty Servicemembers. Apply today—it's the only way to find out if you are eligible. [www.va.gov/explore](http://www.va.gov/explore)

**XXX**

### **Army plans to close retiree AKO accounts by March 31, 2014**

On Sept. 20, the Army published its plan to modernize Army Knowledge Online, or AKO. The plan transitions business users to a suite of more secure, interoperable Department of Defense, or DoD, services. The improved security requires users to have Common Access Cards, or CACs, embedded with users' personal digital certificates.

The Army will close all accounts for military and civilian retirees and Family members, who do not have CACs. The Army plans to close inactive retiree and Family member AKO accounts on Dec. 31. These are accounts that have not had a password change in over 90 days and are not set to automatically forward email to another government account. The Army will also remove email storage for active retiree and Family member accounts on this date.



On March 31, 2014, the Army will close all remaining retiree and family member AKO accounts. To ease the transition, the Army G-6 recently approved an exception to policy that allows retirees and Family members to automatically forward their AKO email to a civilian email address until Dec. 31, 2014.

However, retirees must set this up in their AKO account profiles before Dec. 31, 2013.

To avoid disruptions to communications and personal accounts, retirees should take the following steps as soon as possible:

- Obtain a personal email address from a civilian provider.
- Replace AKO email addresses in all personal accounts – especially myPay accounts at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, <https://www.mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.
- Obtain a premium Department of Defense Self-Service Logon, or DS Logon, account <https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/registration.do?execution=e1s1>. This account allows access to personal benefits records and claims on DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs websites.
- Download important emails and files to a personal computer.

For updated information on the AKO transition, visit <http://www.eis.army.mil/ako>.

DS Logon now a must for most retirees

WASHINGTON — The Department of Defense Self-Service Logon, or DS Logon, is a relatively new, secure, self-service logon ID that allows DoD and VA members and affiliates access to real-time, personalized information on government websites using a single username and password.

When the Army closes the last retiree and Family member AKO accounts on March 31, 2014, DS Logon will be the only method for these users to access their personal information on secure DOD and VA websites.

Users must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS, to obtain a DS Logon username and password. Currently, active duty, Guard/Reservist, retiree service members, spouses and surviving spouses, veterans and eligible Family members 18 and over can obtain a DS Logon account:

There are two types of DS Logon accounts — a Basic Account and a Premium Account.

Applications currently using DS Logon include the VA's eBenefits portal; TRICARE Online portals; Beneficiary Web Enrollment; MilConnect: Transferability of Education Benefits; Health Net Federal Services; Humana Military; MyTricare.com; and TRICAREoverseas.com among others. DS Logon will be the primary method of authentication for all DoD and VA websites in the not-to-distant future.

There are several ways to obtain a DS Logon account. The quickest and most convenient method of obtaining a premium account is to complete the "remote proofing process" at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess/>. This involves using a secure ID that users may already have, such as a Social Security number, and answering three basic, personal questions.

### **DS Logon now a must for most retirees**

WASHINGTON — The Department of Defense Self-Service Logon (DS Logon) is a relatively new, secure, self-service logon ID that allows Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) members and affiliates access to real-time, personalized information on government websites using a single username and password.

When the Army closes the last retiree and family member Army Knowledge Online (AKO) accounts on Mar. 31, 2014, DS Logon will be the only method for these users to access their personal information on secure DOD and VA websites.

Users must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to obtain a DS Logon username and password. Currently, the following groups of people can obtain a DS Logon account:

- Service members (active duty, Guard/Reservists, retirees) • Spouses (including surviving spouses)
- Veterans • Eligible family members (18 and over)

There are two types of DS Logon accounts: a **Basic Account** and a **Premium Account**.

- A **Basic Account** can be obtained online without verification of your identity, but it provides only limited access to website features. Personal information in VA or DOD systems cannot be accessed. The main advantage of a basic account is that it enables you to upgrade more quickly to a premium account when you go in person to a VA Regional Office or a TRICARE Service Center.

- A **Premium Account** allows users to access websites that contain their personal information.

Applications currently using DS Logon include the VA's eBenefits portal; TRICARE Online portals; Beneficiary Web Enrollment;

MilConnect: Transferability of Education Benefits; Health Net Federal Services; Humana Military; [MyTricare.com](http://MyTricare.com); and [TRICAREoverseas.com](http://TRICAREoverseas.com)

to name a few. DS Logon will be the primary method of authentication for all DOD and VA websites in the not-toodistant future. There are several ways to obtain a DS Logon account. The quickest and most convenient method of obtaining a premium account is to complete the "remote proofing process" at

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess/>. This involves using a secure ID that

users may already have, such as a Social Security Number, and answering three basic, personal questions.

Common Access Card (CAC) holders may upgrade their accounts immediately using their CAC.

Individuals who do not have a CAC and who cannot complete the remote proofing process may request an activation code from the Defense Manpower Data Center if they have a *myPay* account established at DFAS.

Users who cannot complete any of these preferred processes may obtain a DS Logon premium account by visiting a VA Regional Office or a TRICARE Service Center, locations of which can be found on the "DS Logon – My Access Center" at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess/>. Many RAPIDS offices (military ID card offices) can also provide DS Logon accounts. Check in advance to ensure they have the capability.

## **New Publication on Military Children and Families**

*We are sharing the **Military Children and Families** digital publication with our MCEC members. In addition, Military Installation, School District, and Individual Lifetime members received the print version of the full publication and policy brief by mail. The full publication is also available on the 'Policies and Initiatives' page of the MCEC website ([click here](#)).*

Enjoy this newly released *Military Children and Families* publication!

*"This publication sounds a clarion call for action. The clear, powerful, consistent message of intellectual unity of purpose around the military child and family summons the urgent attention and action of all with the capacity to assist. The health and well-being of those who have carried the burdens of service and sacrifice deserve the careful, coordinated system of care that enables reliable, long-term, sustainable responses to their needs."*

-Patty Shinseki, MCEC Board Member

#### **M - PetsLoyal2vets –Jeff LeBaron, Founder and Executive Director**

- Non-Profit with goal to connect MN Veterans diagnosed and treated for PTSD, and traumatic brain injuries and physical assault traumas with companion and therapy dogs, and psychiatric service dogs
  - o Great need for service dogs
  - o After he completed PTSD therapy, began research to find available resources
  - o All PetsLoyal2Vets services FREE to Veterans
  - o Will take in Veterans' own dogs and train them
  - o If Veterans lack financial resources, their office will take care of dog while Veterans are in hospital
  - o Meeting the needs of Veterans
  - o Meet ADI Standards in terms of training for dogs, to comply with rules
  - o Psychiatric service dogs maintain all same public access rights as service dogs

- o Became legal last February
- o Four Board members are Veterans: Marine, Army, Navy, and Air Force
- o Looking for funding though state and federal levels
- o 48,000 sq. ft. building- procuring funding right now
- o Pierce and St. Gray county: asked if they would service their Veterans, as well
- o Open State-wide to MN Veteran
- o Confidential online application to participate in program
- o Website is [www. PetsLoyal2Vets.org](http://www.PetsLoyal2Vets.org)

### **Military website teaches parenting skills**

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. -- A new website from the Defense Department is helping parents communicate with their children. [MilitaryParenting.org](http://MilitaryParenting.org) is a free, online course that gives a "boot camp" approach to the basics of parenting.

"The demands of parenting are difficult, especially for a military parent," said Dr. Pam Murphy, psychologist for the parenting website at the National Center for Telehealth & Technology. "It's a daily challenge for them to stay close and connected with their children with the frequent separations and hazards of a military lifestyle."

The interactive course modules help parents deal with everyday problems and family issues that are unique to the military lifestyle. Videos of military and veteran families sharing their stories throughout the course add a unique first-person perspective.

Senior Airman Matt Siegele and Staff Sergeant Sabrina Siegele, an Air Force couple stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, said they liked the way the modules felt like the parenting and behavior classes they attended.

"We noticed the information about stress relief and being patient is exactly what you would get if you went to see a therapist or a professional," said Staff Sergeant Siegele.

The six modules are: Back into the Family, Promoting Positive Parent-Child Communications, Helping Your Child with Difficult Emotions & Behaviors, Positive Approach to Discipline, Managing Stress & Emotions as a Parent, and Parenting with Emotional & Physical Challenges.

This course helps parents and their children through the uncertainties of military life. Stories about children living with a parent's physical and emotional injuries help parents understand what their own children may not be able to express.

According to a 2011 Defense Department demographic report, more than 44 percent of military members have families. Sixty-seven percent of those families have children younger than 12 years old.

[MilitaryParenting.org](http://MilitaryParenting.org), a standalone course developed by leading behavioral health experts, can also be used with in-person counseling. The course was developed as a joint project of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The National Center for Telehealth & Technology, located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., serves as the primary Department of Defense office for cutting-edge approaches in applying technology to psychological health. T2, as it is commonly known, is a component center of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. More information about T2 and the [MilitaryParenting.org](http://MilitaryParenting.org) website is at [T2health.org/programs/militaryparenting](http://T2health.org/programs/militaryparenting).

XXXXXX

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

Dear Minnesota Public Engagement Friends,

We are delighted to announce the Future of Children's release of its latest journal, dedicated to our military-connected children and their families. As you may know, the Future of Children is a collaboration between Princeton University (Woodrow Wilson School) and the Brookings Institution. This issue is one of its two scholarly journals published each year, and its focus on military children is both exciting and substantive.

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) collaborated on this issue of the journal in order to promote effective policies and programs for military-connected children and their families by providing timely, objective information based on the best available research. This issue's co-editors, Dr. Richard Lerner (Tufts University) and Dr. Steven Cozza (Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences), brought together significant researchers, scholars and practitioners to address issues and implications for the military-connected children both now and in the future. We know you will recognize some of the authors because of their previous publications and, in some cases, their participation in our Public Engagements and National Training Seminar.

You can access the full Journal, the Executive Summary and the Policy Brief at the following link: [The Future of Children - Military Children and Families](#).

As always, we thank you for the work you do on behalf of all military-connected children.

Warm regards,  
Joan Barrett

Joan Patterman Barrett

Coordinator, Living in the New Normal Public Engagements  
Military Child Education Coalition  
909 Mountain Lion Circle Harker Heights, Texas 76548  
Main: 816-746-7966 Mobile: 816-853-4955  
[www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org) ; CFC #10261

XXXXXX

**Tax credit for American military veterans who have served in combat zones.**

**A tax credit for American military veterans who have served in combat zones.**

The credit applies to certain American military called to combat zones in 2009 including Iraq, Afghanistan, Djibouti, Kosovo, Jordan, Turkey, Bahrain and Kyrgyzstan.

American military forces are given a tax break for their service to recognize the inherent danger of duty in these places. Those who qualify can receive a \$120 credit for every month they serve in a combat zone.

**The deadline for claiming the credit for service in 2009 is Oct. 15, 2013.**

To receive the credit, members of the military must file Form M99, Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone, and attach corresponding Form DD-214. If they are still on active duty, they may attach Leave and Earnings statements for each month of qualifying service.

You must have been a Minnesota resident during the time of service to qualify. For more information on the military tax credit and to fill out the form, visit the Department of Revenue's website at [www.revenue.state.mn.us](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us).

Tax credits for service in a combat zone are also available for 2010, 2011 and 2012. For more information, visit the Members of the Military page on the Department of Revenue's [website](#) and sign up for e-mail updates on military credits, application deadlines and tax law changes. For information on [locations](#) that qualify for the tax credit, visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## **M - Trust Vets**

Our mission is to drive business to American Military Veterans to thank them for their service and employ veterans as the staff to do so.

We understand that veterans often times prefer to do business with fellow veterans. We also understand that a significant percentage of civilians would prefer to do business with veterans for most services.

TRUST VETS will serve as a centralized platform to make identifying veterans in your community simple.

Trust Vets is an inexpensive advertising platform where the general public and fellow veterans can offer their gratitude to American Military personnel by doing business with them. Additionally, most of our sales staff has been assembled by re-employing veterans. We are hiring veterans. By simply joining Trust vets community, you will promote your services while also helping to support your fellow vets. We work as a team, we will succeed as a team.

Please use the contact form below or any of the following avenues:

General inquiries/feedback: [info@trustvets.com](mailto:info@trustvets.com)

Employment inquiries: [joe@trustvets.com](mailto:joe@trustvets.com)

Membership inquiries: [dean@trustvets.com](mailto:dean@trustvets.com)

Contact the Founder, Joe Johnson: 612.799.8397



Mailing address:  
TRUST VETS  
P.O. Box 114  
Circle Pines, MN 55014

- General inquiries.
- Request assistance in locating Veterans/services not currently listed on TRUST VETS; in most cases we can assist you in finding a Veteran who provides specific services in your area.
- Request a call from a TRUST VETS representative.
- Share feedback about your TRUST VETS experience. What was great? How can we improve our site to better serve you?

Your input is encouraged and very much appreciated!

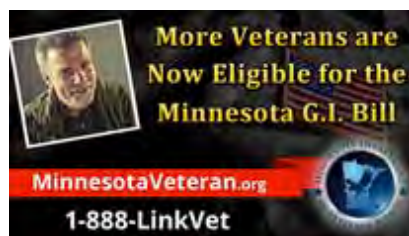
[www.trustvets.com](http://www.trustvets.com) – [info@trustvets.com](mailto:info@trustvets.com) PO Box 114, Circle Pines, MN 55014

### GI Bill Transferability Changes Take Effect August 1

Starting August 1, retirement eligible service members will be required to make an additional four year service commitment in order to be eligible to transfer their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits. This commitment applies regardless of time in service, where previously service members who were at or near retirement eligibility were eligible for options that reduced the service obligation requirements. The upcoming change largely affects senior officers and NCOs who are retirement-eligible, and who previously would have incurred service obligations of zero, one, two or three years when they transferred GI Bill benefits to family members. Read about the additional effects of the rule change [here](#).

## Minnesota GI Bill Expansion

Taylor Stephens  
MDVA



Governor Mark Dayton and the Minnesota State Legislature voted to expand the Minnesota GI Bill to include more Veterans. Previously only Veterans who served after September 11, 2001 were eligible for the Minnesota GI Bill, which supplements other Veteran education programs. Now, under the new law any Veteran under age of 62 who has served honorably in any branch of the armed forces during any time period may be eligible.

“This is important because the program will now assist the Veterans who need it the most,” said David Bellefeuille, director of the Higher Education Veterans Programs for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. Many pre-9/11 Veterans have either used all their federal education benefits, or they have expired. The enhancements to this program will now assist all

Minnesotan Veterans with long-term employment opportunities. The plan starts with education and financial assistance to help Veterans, who have served and sacrificed for this country, achieve their goals.

[Read More >>](#)

XXX

### M -New website launches for Minnesota Veterans

**SAINT PAUL, Minn.** – The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has announced the launch of their newly redesigned website at [MinnesotaVeteran.org](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org). In its continuing effort to be in the forefront of providing the best service and care for the state’s 370,000 Veterans, MDVA is excited to present this new and improved resource to a broad audience of Veterans, families, community, state and federal leaders, members of the media, and the community at large.

MDVA partnered with High Monkey Consulting (HMC), based in Roseville Minn., on development of the new design. Over the last year they worked with staff across MDVA to support the Department’s mission of “Serving Minnesota Veterans and their families.” Created specifically with Veterans and families in mind, the website is designed to be user friendly with improved navigation that will serve as a vehicle to help Minnesotans get timely information and news.

“This website provides a vibrant, seamless view of our department and the resources available to Minnesota Veterans. This is just another example of how we’re committed to making Minnesota Government better for Veterans who served, as well as those who continue to serve. The end result of our new MDVA website was based largely on feedback from our stakeholders - the Veterans we serve - alongside extensive research and testing that has brought us to this unveiling,” said Larry Shellito, MDVA Commissioner.

Featuring a nostalgic “retro” design, the home page of the site welcomes online users with a rotating carousel of featured items that include women Veterans, the Support our Troops license plates, Veteran employment and more. The structure is divided between major menu items of About, News, Benefits & Resources, Memorials & Burials, Veterans Homes, LinkVet Support, and a new Blog. Visitors and users can find out how to request discharge papers, learn about the GI Bill, access employment resources, take a virtual tour of any of the five State Veterans Homes, subscribe to the new blog, learn about state Veteran memorials, start a live chat and much more. The site also incorporates video and multimedia elements, a new pressroom, LinkVet’s FAQ Veteran support portal and more.

## **M - Eagle's Turf**

20th of June, Jessica Miles of KSTP TV interviewed the veterans who used Eagle's Turf last year and the chairman and founder at the St. Cloud VA. Be sure to watch that interview will be highlighted on the 10:00 PM news this Sunday night, 30 June 2013 on channel 5.

**VISION** :Eagle's Turf will develop and implement a program at Veterans Affairs facilities nationwide to provide disabled Veterans with a golf experience, which gives them an opportunity for improved self esteem, camaraderie, meeting personal goals, and positive community experiences they can use in other areas of their lives.

**MISSION:** Eagle's Turf strives to improve the lives of disabled Veterans, providing a complimentary, in depth golf experience (lessons, program coordination, and equipment) to the Veteran.

We will provide an enjoyable program, potentially enhancing physical and mental health at Department of Veterans Affairs facilities throughout the United States.

Eagle's Turf coordinates these activities with the Department of Veterans Affairs and in partnership with the PGA, LPGA, and with assistance of community and corporate sponsors.

**2013 ROLL OUT PLAN:**•10 programs:•4 Minnesota•1 Iowa•2 South Dakota•3 North Dakota

**Program definition:** •10 disabled Veterans per program •10 sessions per program including two rounds of golf•Golf equipment, facilities, accessories, and apparel•2 PGA/LPGA Professionals per session•VA sponsored Therapist per session•Local Rotary Club volunteers

**BUDGET 2013 \$80,000 (10 PROGRAMS)**

**Expenditures:** •Golf Clubs •Golf accessories ( balls, tees, etc. )•Golf apparel ( hats, tee shirts )•PGA/LPGA labor•Facilities•Green fees•Refreshments•Transportation

## **M - The Minnesota Zoo - Military Family Week July 1-7**

### **inTransition Provides Mental Health Services to Service Members and Families**

For military families, maintaining consistency is a difficult task. For those receiving mental health care, consistency is an even more difficult task to manage. inTransition provides service members and their families with the resources they need to maintain quality of care and find new mental health care providers as they transition to active duty, new duty stations, and retirement. Among its services, the program offers each service member a one-on-one transitional support coach, available by phone, who is a masters-level, licensed behavioral health clinician, information for service members about their mental health care and how to successfully change providers at the time of transfer or discharge, and crisis intervention services to help members with urgent/emergent conditions attain safe and appropriate services. For more information about inTransition, please visit [their website](#).

## **DoD Training Prepares Care Coordinators to Support Service Members, Families and Caregivers**

Quarterly training for Recovery Care Coordinators, Advocates, Non-Medical Case Managers and other non-medical care coordinators with standardized DoD-level training to prepare them for their mission of supporting recovering Service members, families and caregivers throughout the continuum of care. Topics covered during training included Office of Warrior Care Policy programs such as the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I), Operation Warfighter (OWF) and the Military Adaptive Sports Program (MASP).

Care coordinators will also be trained to recognize and respond to issues commonly faced by recovering Service members and families, including traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide prevention and sexual assault prevention and response. In addition to receiving information and training for knowledgeable agencies and organizations, trainees also benefitted from hearing first-hand accounts from those familiar with their experience. Read more about this training event [here](#).

XXXX

## **MyMilitaryLife, Now with 10 Life Paths**

The National Military Family Association announced that their popular first-of-its-kind mobile app now features 10 life paths to help military families navigate the many adventures the military takes them on. With more than 10,000 official military and community support websites providing information for military families, it is often difficult to navigate which sites are supplying credible information. Families are left scouring the internet to try and piece together the best resources to support the next steps in their life. For the first time families have access to trusted information right at their fingertips, specifically identified for their current life challenges and goals. Life Paths include deployment, having a baby, moving, and spouse employment, and some of the app's key features include customized to-do lists, push notifications, and due date reminders. Click here to [read more and download](#) MyMilitaryLife to your Apple and Android devices.

## **In Gear Career Helping Military Spouses Seeking Employment**

Military spouses have a difficult time maintaining a career that is flexible or portable enough to fit with their military lifestyle. In Gear Career, a new nonprofit, is working to secure not just employment, but lasting careers for military spouses. Started by military spouses, the people behind In Gear Career know that one of the greatest impediments to achieving long-term career growth is the difficulty they have building a professional network each time they relocate. In order to address this need, In Gear Career will establish two different types of communities in which Military Spouses with professional careers can interact. Through local chapters and online communities, a strong network of career minded Military Spouses will be established and meet for support, professional development and networking opportunities near all major military installations.

Online communities of past and present Military Spouses in the same occupational field are available to support each other and share career related advice and information to enhance the career prospects of all community members. Learn more about In Gear Career [here](#).

## **DoD Launches Chat Room for Sexual Assault Victims**

DoD announced the launch of The Safe HelpRoom created in response to Safe Helpline users who identified a need for peer support services. The new service allows victims of sexual assault to participate in group chat sessions to connect with and support one another in a moderated secure online environment at [SafeHelpline.org](http://SafeHelpline.org). The moderator is also available to provide referrals as necessary and ensure all ground rules are adhered to prior to chat postings. "Survivors of sexual assault have told us that being able to discuss their concerns with peers can provide a level of support not available through other means," said Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica L. Wright. "The Safe HelpRoom is a groundbreaking development in the department's commitment to support military victims of sexual assault."

Safe HelpRoom sessions will begin immediately and are available twice weekly in two-hour sessions. The session schedule can be found at [SafeHelpline.org](http://SafeHelpline.org), along with polls to determine session topics to address specific concerns. The Safe HelpRoom and Safe Helpline are administered by DoD and operated by the non-profit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, through a contractual agreement with DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO).

Read more [here](#).

## **DOD, VA and HHS Partner to Expand Access to Mental Health Services**

The DoD, VA, and Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the progress made to date on initiatives called for in President Obama's August 31, 2012 Executive Order to Improve Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and their families. "One of the great challenges we face as a nation is how to provide quality, accessible, long term, mental health care for service members, veterans and their families. Using the combined resources and expertise from across the government we are advancing services for those who have sacrificed so much for our nation," said Secretary of Defense Hagel. The departments released an interim report, outlining progress on this initiative, including:

- Increasing the capacity of the Veterans Crisis Line by 50 percent to help ensure that veterans in crisis can readily reach help.
- Establishing 15 pilot projects in seven states where VA is working with community-based mental health providers to help veterans access mental health services in a timely way.
- Increasing VA mental health services capacity through VA hiring of nearly 1,400 mental health providers and over 248 new peer specialists.
- Implementing a national suicide prevention campaign to connect veterans and service members to mental health services.

The departments are actively working on additional deliverables called for in the executive order, including the development of a National Research Action Plan. Read the full report [here](#)

**XXXXXX**

**VA Launches Hotline to Answer Questions on VA Health Care and Benefits for Women Veterans**  
***1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a new hotline 1-855-VA-WOMEN — to receive and respond to questions from Veterans, their families and caregivers about the many VA services and resources available to women Veterans. The service began accepting calls on March 27, 2013.

“Some women Veterans may not know about high-quality VA care and services available to them,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The hotline will allow us to field their questions and provide critical information about the latest enhancements in VA services.”

**The hotline is staffed by knowledgeable VA employees who can provide information about benefits including health care services for women. Callers can be linked to information on claims, education or health care appointments as well as information about VA cemeteries and memorial benefits. Staff can answer urgent questions and provide referrals to homeless and mental health services as well as provide Vet Center information.**

The hotline (1-855-VA-WOMEN) joins numerous other VA hotlines that provide critical information and assistance to Veterans, such as those for Veterans in crisis and in danger of becoming homeless. Veterans can also receive information and apply for benefits online at VA’s [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) and manage their health care at [MyHealthVet.va.gov](http://MyHealthVet.va.gov).

**M - Joint Retired Activities Day (JRAD 2013) - advanced notification .  
Fellow Military Retiree:**

The planning for this year's Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD) is well under way for **28 SEP 2013**. This year's event will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

**Please note that there will be NO mailings this year so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, associates, etc.** For this reason, it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

This year's registration form along with more information can be found on our new website: <https://sites.google.com/site/metrojrad/>

Early Bird Registration: A drawing will be held for: one night stay at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino for two; buffet for two; and concert tickets of your choice for two. Early Bird Registration must be received at Navy RAO by **August 16, 2013**.

**Regular Registration is required by Sep 6th, 2013.**

**JRAD 2013**

#### **GI Bill Policy Update to Transferability Rules**

Soldiers who opt to transfer their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to a family member will now be required to serve an extra four years in the Army, regardless of the amount of time they've already been in the service. The [policy change](#), announced in an April 15 memo to military personnel, starts Aug. 1. The new rule will affect mainly retirement-eligible senior officers and enlisted soldiers. The current policy allows retirement-



eligible members to transfer their GI benefits to a family member with anywhere from zero to three extra years' service depending on the length of time the applicant has been in the military. Non-retirement-eligible soldiers who wish to transfer their GI Bill benefits to a family member were already required to have six years of active duty and then re-up for another four years. The new policy makes the additional four-years a requirement for anyone wanting to transfer their benefits.

### **M - Save the Date! Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute**

**You are invited to attend the upcoming *Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute TM(GRI)*.** The Military Child Education Coalition® (MCEC®), a nonprofit organization addressing the educational needs of children in military families, presents the training. The institute focuses on information needed to raise community awareness about the issues faced by children when a parent is deployed. Through a combination of direct instruction, group work and interactive activities, participants develop strategies and the framework of an Action Plan to support the “suddenly military” children.

Log on to [MilitaryChild.org](http://MilitaryChild.org) to register!

#### **Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute**

##### ***Date and Time: Place:***

May 15 & 16, 2013 Le St. Germain Suite Hotel

Registration & Breakfast: 8:00 to 8:30 404 West St. Germain

Institute Training: 8:30 am—4:00 pm St. Cloud, MN 56301

Including a working lunch

##### ***Sponsor:***

Funded by Office of the Secretary of Defense; **No Cost to Participants**

##### ***Learning Outcomes:***

- Recall basic information about the U. S. Military Reserve component (National Guard and Reserves)
- Identify and discuss the effects of mobilization and deployment separation on children of Reserve Component Service Members
- Identify community and military resources and networks that support these military connected children.
- Prepare an action plan model designed to encourage the natural resilience of these children in your professional communities.

##### ***Credit Options:***

Participants may apply for Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit up to 1.2 CEU (12 hours = 1.2 CEU) upon completion of training. Completion requirements are:

- Attendance at 95% of the training
- A score of 80% or higher on an end-of-course assessment
- Completion of an end-of-course evaluation

The fee for the CEU credit is \$25.00, payable upon completion of training. Participants may also receive one hour graduate credit from Texas A&M-Central Texas for a fee of \$175.00

##### ***Contact Information:***

For more information about this training, other professional development opportunities, or learner support, **please contact Myriam Virella at 254-953-1923 x 1119 or [myriam.virella@militarychild.org](mailto:myriam.virella@militarychild.org)**

**“Military Child Education Coalition®,” “MCEC®” and associated trademarks and design elements are owned by the Military Child Education Coalition. © 2012 Military Child Education Coalition. All Rights Reserved**

##### **There's an App for That.....**

For Apps and others DoDT2 Apps, visit <http://t2health.org/products/mobile-apps>.

DoD Safe Helpline [www.SafeHelpline.com](http://www.SafeHelpline.com)  
MyMilitaryLife  
ArmyOneSource [www.myarmyonesource.com](http://www.myarmyonesource.com)  
Money Matters Financial Tools [www.myarmyonesource.com](http://www.myarmyonesource.com)  
Sesame Street for Military Families

### [Provider Resilience](#)

▪

Provider Resilience gives health care providers tools to guard against burnout and compassion fatigue as they help service members, veterans, and their families.

### [LifeArmor](#)

▪

LifeArmor is a comprehensive learning and self-management tool to assist members of the military community with common mental health concerns. Built for both iOS and Android, LifeArmor is portable and provides information and assistance at the touch of a button.

### [Positive Activity Jackpot](#)

▪

The Positive Activity Jackpot app uses augmented reality technology to combine a phone's GPS and camera to find nearby enjoyable activities or pleasant diversions.

### [BioZen](#)

▪

The Department of Defense developed Biozen to help service members use the therapeutic benefits of biofeedback. BioZen is the first portable, low-cost method for clinicians and patients to use biofeedback in and out of the clinic.

This app takes many of the large medical sensors in a clinic and puts them in the hands of anyone with a smart phone. BioZen makes it easier for anyone to get started with biofeedback.

### [PE Coach](#)

▪

PE Coach is the first mobile app designed to support the tasks associated with prolonged exposure treatment for PTSD. Providing hip-pocket access to the necessary tools for successful PE participation, the app includes audio recording capability for easy playback after sessions; tools to support patient tasks between sessions; and visual displays of symptom reduction over time.

## [Tactical Breather](#)

▪

The Tactical Breather application can be used to gain control over physiological and psychological responses to stress. Through repetitive practice and training, anyone can learn to gain control of your heart rate, emotions, concentration, and other physiological and psychological responses to your body during stressful situations.

## [Co-Occurring Conditions Toolkit \(CCT\)](#)

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) presents a number of challenges to military healthcare professionals. Because symptoms of closed head wounds are often similar to those of a number of psychological conditions, assessing and treating patients presenting multiple conditions can be difficult.

## [mTBI Pocket Guide Mobile Application](#)

▪

The Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Pocket Guide mobile application for health care providers gives instant access to a comprehensive quick-reference guide on improving care for mTBI patients. Designed to reflect current clinical standards of care, the mTBI Pocket Guide mobile application can help you improve quality of care and clinical outcomes for patients.

## [PTSD Coach](#)

▪

PTSD Coach was developed by T2 in cooperation with the Veteran Affairs Administration's [National Center for PTSD](#). The goal was to develop a mobile application to assist Veterans and Active Duty personnel (and civilians) who are experiencing symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

## [Breathe2Relax](#)

▪

Breathe2Relax is a portable stress management tool. Built on the iPhone mobile app platform, Breathe2Relax is a hands-on diaphragmatic breathing exercise. Breathing exercises have been documented to decrease the body's 'fight-or-flight' (stress) response, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, and anxiety management.

## [T2 Mood Tracker](#)

▪

T2 Mood Tracker is a mobile application that allows users to monitor and track emotional health. Originally developed as a tool for service members to easily record and review their behavior changes, particularly after combat deployments, it has now become very popular with many civilian users around the world.

## **M - Yellow Ribbon Program Network**

I wanted to send you the most updated Point of Contact List for the Yellow Ribbon Networks across MN. This list is also kept updated on our site: <http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org/yellow-ribbon-community-campaign>.

Please pass along to your families as all of our Networks are trying to connect with military connected residents (active, veteran of any age/era, family members, etc) in their communities. The families don't have to wait until they have a need, the Networks would love to know that they are there in case they need anything or if the families would like to volunteer within their own communities. It is a great way to connect with other military families/parents/relatives!

Thank you.

Annette Brechon Kuyper  
Director of Military Outreach  
MN Department of Military Affairs  
20 West 12th Street  
St Paul, MN 55155-2004  
(o) 651-282-4002  
(c) 651-955-3108  
ANNETTE.B.KUYPER.NFG@MAIL.MIL

Welcome to [Exam2Jobs.com](#), one of the top certification exam and job sites on the internet. We've created this site in order to help you learn everything you need to know about the certification test (or tests) you'll need to pass in order to embark on a new career or keep moving upward in your current one. In today's very difficult job market, you can't take any chances when it comes to getting or keeping the certifications you need. In today's economy, you're going to be competing against many other people who are just as motivated as you to land the job or promotion you're trying to qualify for, so there's no leeway for failure.

Not long ago, if you failed a certification exam, a prospective employer might have cut you some slack, and hired you on a probationary basis on the condition that you go back and pass the exam in the not too distant future. You had some leeway, some margin for error, because the economy was so strong that there were more job openings than qualified people to fill them. The ball was in the court of the person applying for the job, not the company doing the hiring. Well, those days are long gone. These days, there are far more qualified applicants than job openings for just about every position you can think of. So the ball is now in the employer's court. They've got all the advantages, so they're calling the shots. And because they can pick and choose from several qualified candidates who have already earned their required certification, they're not going to have any time for a person who "plans to" go back and take the test again.

So you'd better be fully prepared when you walk into the testing room. And you came to the right place to get prepared. Our extensive free resources will help you get ready for the test so that you can be confident of getting a high score when you finally sit down to take it. We'll explain how the test works, because understanding the format is a big part of being relaxed and confident, and can also help improve your score. No matter which test you're taking, if you know what to expect, you stand a much better chance of doing well. In addition, we'll provide practice questions for each test, so that you can really get a feel for the level of knowledge you'll be expected to demonstrate, and you'll be able to diagnose areas where you're weak and need to work on improvement. And don't worry; all the questions are free.

In addition to exam certification help, you'll also find over one million job listings on our site. These listings are for openings in nearly every field you can think of, from accounting to warehouse, clerical to construction, entry level to executive. Part time, full time, flex time...you name it, we've got it. No matter where you live in America, or where you want to work, you'll find plenty of jobs listings right here. Best of all, it's free to search, and there's no registration required. No need to fill out any personal details, or give us your email address. Just pick your industry and start searching for jobs immediately [lot to](#)

[Exam2Jobs.com](#) and

<http://www.exam2jobs.com/hospitality-jobs.html>

### **Hiring Our Heroes- Over 100,000 Veterans Hired**

Hiring Our Heroes has aided in the hiring of over 100,000 veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses in the year since they launched their campaign with Capital One. With just a year under their belt, they've reached 20% of their goal of 500,000. The Hiring Our Heroes team is pushing forward with events across the country, and the launching of a new innovative online tool that captures the entirety of a veteran or transitioning service member's experience. The [Personal Branding Resume Engine](#) translates military skills and experience into language that mirrors similar job duties in the civilian world. Hiring Our Heroes also seeks to engage the 27 million small businesses currently driving the economy. In their own version of "March Madness," they have joined with Spike TV's Hire a Vet campaign to launch the Small Business Tournament of Veteran Champions. The goal is simple – find the most veteran

friendly small business in America. In addition to recognizing the small businesses that demonstrated a commitment to recruiting and retaining veterans, we hope this tournament will inspire others to start. Small businesses are encouraged to enter [here](#). [Read more](#) about the efforts of Hiring Our Heroes.

## **Family Engagement Kit**

The Family Engagement Kit (FEK) is an awareness tool designed by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center to involve Army families in Soldier safety. The kit, available online at [U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center](#), includes an interactive two-part safety presentation, informational posters and handouts, videos, interviews with Army spouses, a train-the-trainer module and a listing of helpful family and behavioral health resources, all targeted to on- and off-duty safety hazards.

### **What has the Army done?**

The strength of the Soldiers comes from their families, and engaged families can make a tremendous difference in Soldier safety. The FEK teaches family members how to be their Soldier's "battle buddy" on the home front, adding another layer of influence to the Army's efforts to incorporate safety as a 24/7 lifestyle. In addition to the downloadable online package, complete kit DVDs and companion handbooks are available by request to Soldiers, family members, chaplain offices, family readiness groups, quality of life representatives and Army Community Service organizations at no charge.

### **What efforts does the Army have planned for the future?**

The [U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center](#) reviews the FEK annually to accommodate changes in the force and update resources important in the fight against preventable accidents. The kit continues to evolve to meet the needs of Soldiers and their families. Feedback from spouses, family members, family readiness groups and Soldiers in the field, along with accident trends and Army mission requirements, continue to inspire new and expanded versions of the FEK.

### **Why is this important to the Army?**

Army families have always been a cornerstone of support for Soldiers. As the Army has adjusted to the challenges accompanying repeated deployment, separation, reintegration and the ongoing drawdown, families have become an increasingly important line of defense in the Army's efforts to curb preventable accidents. The FEK involves family members in safety and empowers them to be a proactive, positive force in their Soldiers' lives.

### **Resources:**

- ^ [U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center](#)
- ^ [Family Engagement Kit](#)

## **M - Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)**

Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been assisting veterans & their families statewide since 1990 through three regional offices located in Duluth, Twin Cities, and Mankato. It is estimated that 1% of the veterans in this state, or close to 4,000, will experience an episode of homelessness or a crisis that could lead to homelessness this year. MACV is there to assist, focusing on housing, employment, and legal assistance.



To learn more about MACV call 651-291-8756 or visit us at [www.mac-v.org](http://www.mac-v.org).

### **The Old Glory Run May 18**

The Old Glory Run will take place on May 18th in Cold Springs, Minnesota. The proceeds from this event will go to the Minnesota branch of Disabled American Veterans. To learn more and register for this event please [visit their website](#).

**XXX**

### **Officials Unveil Resilience Mobile App for Health Care Providers**

There's a new mobile application designed to provide help for those that provide for others. DoD's Provider Resilience app is the first mobile application for health care workers to build resilience for the stress in their lives. Dedicated clinicians often put their patients first, and their own needs second," said Dr. Robert Ciulla, psychologist and director of T2's mobile health program. "The app was designed to fit easily into the busy lives of health care workers and remind them to be mindful of their own emotional health." The app features tracking tools for all of the important areas of a caregivers life, featuring elements like a "burnout" scale, a vacation clock, and a quality of life scale that allows them to assess personal traumas. The app's toolbox encourages users to reduce stress with restful breaks with educational videos, inspirational cards, patient testimonials and stretching exercises. The app is free and is available on both Android and Apple devices. Learn more [here](#).

### **Tuition Assistance Reinstated**

If you have been following the traffic on the sequestration cuts, you know that the news changes every day. Last week, the House adopted the Senate's amendment to reverse the decision to suspend the Tuition Assistance program. There is no word yet on how the cost will be covered, but the good news is that TA will now be restored. As you breathe a sigh of relief, remember that even with this success, we're still in a period of uncertainty. But you don't have to wait for a program to be cancelled before you go on a search for education funding alternatives. Here are some points to keep in mind so that in the future your education plans are not threatened just because a program is.

- ▲ Visit your nearest [Education Center](#) to speak with an Education Service Officer- they are professionals when it comes to education counseling, and will be aware of current opportunities at the installation level.
- ▲ Contact the Student Veterans Association, an organization made up of a coalition of student veteran groups on campuses across the globe. They work to provide support and resources for veterans in continuing education at all different levels. Though their services might not be specific to your situation, they will likely have easily available information or ideas for getting your education without TA. Visit their website for more information, and to find a chapter near you.
- ▲ Carefully research all of your funding options before deciding to dig into your 36 month allotment of GI Bill benefits. It's also important to know which type of [GI Bill](#) to use.
- ▲ While it might take a little extra work on your part, there are many funding options available through scholarships. It is free to apply, and many schools, programs, and organizations have scholarships geared specifically toward service members. In addition to looking into options at the school you plan on attending, here is a [list of military focused scholarships](#) to get you started.
- ▲ Contact your local AUSA chapter. This is a great way to stay connected to the ongoing issue at the local level, and chapter leaders could have valuable guidance or suggestions about your next steps in

securing education funding. Your local chapter might also be aware of education financial assistance available through the Association. [Locate](#) your local chapter and find out about opportunities near you!

### **Important Tax Information for Members of the Military**

For those who have yet to file their taxes this year, there are a few important pieces of information to keep in mind as you gather all of your forms and files together. The IRS highlights [benefits](#) and exemptions specific to military members, including first time home buyer credit and the combat zone exclusion, where pay is excluded from taxes in the month in which there was service in a combat zone or hospitalization as a result of wounds, disease or injury while serving. Many members of the military are able to get their tax returns prepared for free on or off most military bases including overseas locations. The U.S. Armed Forces participates in the Volunteer Income Tax

Assistance program sponsored by the IRS. VITA provides free tax advice, tax preparation, tax return filing and other tax help to military members and their families. Read more about this program and what to bring to have a tax return prepared [here](#).

### **New VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Maplewood**

The new Maplewood VA Outpatient Clinic location at 1725 Legacy Parkway Suite 100, opened on March 4, and is now available for regularly scheduled appointments.



This move will provide a larger space to serve Veterans. The new clinic is located at the northeast corner of Kennard Street and Legacy Parkway in Maplewood, MN, a suburb northeast of downtown St. Paul. The 14,000 square foot building is three times the size of the previous clinic, which opened in 1999, on White Bear Avenue. The new lease was awarded to MSP Commercial for a period of 10 years.

Services include primary care, behavioral health and specialty telemedicine. The clinic is also equipped with a laboratory and radiology equipment.

**The Maplewood CBOC provides care for more than 4,000 Veterans.**

### **Army Reserve Retirement Services**

In an effort to increase Army Reserve Soldier's awareness and understanding of their retirement benefits, the Army Reserve created dedicated Retirement Services Offices within each Regional Support Command (RSC) in April 2012. These offices are staffed by two trained Soldiers - an officer and a senior non-commissioned officer. Their purpose is to provide timely and accurate benefits information to all retiring and retired Soldiers, surviving spouses and their families.

## **What has the Army Reserve done?**

The 2002 Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) Conference via AFAP issue #529 recommended the placement of Retirement Services Officers (RSOs) in each RSC to address the disparity in retirement services support provided to active component personnel vs. Army Reserve personnel. Army research indicated that the Army Reserve did not have viable systems in place to provide pre/post retirement services comparable to the services received by the active component and National Guard.

The Ready and Resilient Campaign also builds upon physical, emotional and psychological resilience in our Soldiers, families and civilians so they improve performance to deal with the rigors and challenges of a demanding profession.

## **What continued efforts does the Army Reserve have planned for the future?**

Army research indicated Soldiers at approximately 18 years of service needed to be better educated about retirement services support. Educating Soldiers about their retirement benefits is critical to ensuring they are able to make good decisions when they reach 20 years and have to make a [Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan]([https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan RCSBP Coverage and Costs](https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Reserve%20Component%20Survivor%20Benefit%20Plan%20RCSBP%20Coverage%20and%20Costs)) election.

The Army Reserve conducts pre-retirement seminars in each RSC region with a goal of hosting a minimum of four seminars regionally each year. The program continues to make progress in ensuring adequate permanent placement of civilian personnel within each RSC to handle its regional area of responsibility, ensuring all Soldiers receive the support they need and deserve at the appropriate time in the transition process. The transition of all Soldiers, not just those retiring, is a process, not an event; the earlier Soldiers begin the transition process, the more successful they will be.

## **Why is this important to the Army?**

The Army is committed to providing the men and women who have selflessly served our great nation with the resources and support necessary to posture themselves for a seamless transition to civilian life. The establishment of Army Reserve Retirement Services offices is just one component of the Army's unprecedented effort to ensure the resources and support are provided to help transitioning Soldiers and families as they depart the Army.

## **Resources:**

- ⤴ [Army Reserve Retirement Services Offices](#)
- ⤴ [Army G1 Retirement Services Office](#)
- ⤴ [Army Reserve](#)
- ⤴ [Army Reserve Non-Regular Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- ⤴ [MyArmyBenefit](#)
- ⤴ [Upcoming Pre-retirement Seminars]([https://arg1web.usar.army.mil/Retirement Services/](https://arg1web.usar.army.mil/Retirement%20Services/) )

## **Army Emergency Relief**

Financial security is a key element of a ready and resilient force. The [Army Emergency Relief \(AER\)](#) Annual Campaign is conducted from March 1st through May 15th in order to increase Soldier awareness of this benefit, as well as to give Soldiers the opportunity to help their fellow Soldiers by donating. Local commanders can adjust their campaign dates as their mission dictates.

[AER](#) is a private nonprofit organization incorporated in 1942 to relieve financial distress of Soldiers and their dependents. Today, AER provides financial assistance to Soldiers, retirees and their families in the form of interest-free loans and grants in support of a variety of needs including:

- ⤴ • Emergency assistance for rent, food, travel, car repair, funeral, medical and dental expenses, car seats, repair/replacement of appliances and HVAC equipment, rental cars, replacement vehicles, cranial helmets and furniture
- ⤴ • Children and spouse scholarships
- ⤴ • Grants to Soldiers medically evacuated from combat theaters
- ⤴ • Support to families of fallen Soldiers AER assistance is available to Soldiers, retirees and their families wherever they are located. The amount of assistance is only limited by the amount of the valid need. They should contact their chain of command or local AER office. Under the AER Command Referral Program, company commanders and first sergeants have the authority to approve AER loans to their Soldiers up to \$1,500. Soldiers, retirees and families not near an AER office can seek assistance from the Air Force Aid Society, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance on their respective bases or call the national American Red Cross call center at (877) 272-7337.

### **What has the Army done?**

In 2012, the Army and AER disbursed more than \$76.8 million in total assistance to more than 59,000 active and retired Soldiers and families to meet emergency financial and educational assistance needs.

### **What efforts does the Army have planned for the future?**

The Army supports AER and its annual AER campaign through mission, installation, and garrison commanders and command sergeant majors personally attending campaign kick-off events to increase awareness and offer Soldiers the opportunity to donate to AER.

### **Why is this important to the Army?**

Soldiers, retirees and their families need to know that AER assistance is available in times of financial need. Army Emergency Relief is dedicated to "*Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own*" and provides Army leaders a valuable asset in ensuring a ready source of financial assistance to Soldiers and their families.

### **Resources:**

- ⤴ [Army Emergency Relief website](#)
- ⤴ [American Red Cross](#)
- ⤴ Related article: [AER scholarships available for families of Soldiers](#)

### **M - 25 Veterans' Voices Award**

In the spirit of celebrating the accomplishments of Minnesota veterans, the Humanities Center will host an unprecedented event that celebrates 25 Veterans' Voices to recognize the next great generation. The **25 Veterans' Voices Award** will highlight veterans who have made exceptional contributions to the community, in business, health care, public safety, education, the arts, government or any other endeavor which merits recognition. These rising stars have not merely returned to civilian life but are thriving and giving back to their Minnesota communities. We are seeking nominations of veterans age 40 and under who have made a difference in the

community. Selected veterans will be officially recognized at the *25 Veterans' Voices Award* Ceremony held on September 11, 2013.

### Nomination Selection Criteria

#### **The selection criteria for nominations include:**

1. Currently serving, honorable discharge from military service or eligible for upgrade.
2. Actively involved in the community.
3. Must have made a significant difference to advance society in public or private sector.
4. Age 40 and under.

### Nomination Form Instructions

#### **Online Nomination Instructions**

The nominations can be made by community leaders, individuals or military personnel by submitting a 500 word or less description of the background, accomplishment(s), and exceptional contribution(s) of the veteran. **Be sure to complete this 500 word or less document and have it available to upload before completing the separate nomination form.** [Nominate someone for 25 Veterans' Voices Award online](#). The nominations must be submitted no later than **Monday, June 3, 2013**.

#### **Mailing Instructions**

If you would rather mail in your submission, print off the [nomination form](#), fill it in, and attach a copy of the 500 word or less description of the veteran you are nominating. The nominations must be postmarked no later than **Monday, June 3, 2013**. Send nomination form and 500 word document to:

*Minnesota Humanities Center  
Attention: 25 Veterans' Voices  
987 Ivy Avenue East  
St. Paul, MN 55106*

#### **XXXX**

#### **TRICARE Provides Options for National Guard and Reserve Members and their Families**

Though they don't always wear the uniform, or live on military installations, National Guard and Reserve members and their families are part of the military community, and as such, should have benefits available to them. TRICARE provides health care options for National Guard and Reserve components, with coverage depending on uniformed service status: not activated, activated, deactivated, or retired. While activated for a period of 30 or more consecutive, Guard and Reserve members are covered as active duty service members. But active duty families are not the only ones eligible to receive health care benefits. Once registered in DEERS, service members and their families become eligible to receive medical and dental care in plans specific to their service status. Look over this [fact sheet](#) for the full guidelines and eligibility, along with detailed tables of several different benefit plans.

#### **M – Twin Cities Honor Flight**



**Sponsored by Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity**

In May of 2004, our nation completed the construction of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. to commemorate the sacrifices of the "Greatest Generation." Sadly, because of their age, financial constraints or health concerns many of these veterans may not have an opportunity to see their monument. Honor Flight, a non-profit organization based out of Ohio, offers free flights to World War II veterans to Washington D.C. to see the National World War II Monuments.

Since inception in May 2005 almost 100,000 Veterans from across the United States have been safely transported as guests of Honor Flight. The 501c (3) Non-Profit Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity (MNVVC) is in a partnership with the National Honor Flight Organization. Saturday, April 27, 2013, MNVVC is sponsoring the Ninth flight for 100 Minnesota and Western Wisconsin World War II Veterans to Washington D C. Veterans living within a 70-mile radius of the Minneapolis/St Paul Airport may request an application for Honor Flight. The Veterans and Guardians on this ONE- DAY Excursion called Honor Flight Twin Cities will leave the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport from the Hubert Humphrey Charter Terminal 2 on a Sun Country Airlines at 6:15 AM and return at 10:30 PM. A Homecoming Party will be waiting for them when they return to the Hubert Humphrey Terminal.

Funds are needed to pay for the charter aircraft, deluxe tour bus service, hats, tee shirts, wheelchairs, meals and a biography book of the Veterans for everyone on the flight. All are provided free of charge to WW II Veterans. Sixty two trained Guardians will personally escort the 100 Veterans on the aircraft and accompany them throughout the day. A Video and Photos of the Honor Flight will also be provided to all the Veterans and Guardians. Guardians donate a \$500 Tax Deductable contribution for the trip. The WWII Heroes go for FREE. They have paid enough. The local Honor Flight Twin Cities organization Office Phone # is 651-481-8835.

**HonorFlightTwinCities.org**  
**ATTN: Jerry Kyser**  
**2674 Mackubin Street**  
**Roseville, MN 55113**  
**651-481-8835 – Office/Fax**

**HONOR FLIGHTS National Website**  
**[www.HonorFlight.org](http://www.HonorFlight.org)**  
**937-521-2400**

This program operates on **Donations** from Organizations and Individuals. Honor Flight Twin Cities is under the shared 501c (3) Non-Profit umbrella of the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity. We have the Saturday April 27, 2013 and Saturday October 5, 2013 Flights FILLED with WWII Veterans and Guardians. We will have additional flights in April and October 2014. We intend to continue WWII Honor Flights until we cannot find 100 Veterans to go. To get on the waiting list for any future flights, copy an application from our website and MAIL it to us.

If you would like further information about this wonderful program, please contact Honor Flight Twin Cities at: Jerry Kyser at 651-481-8835. Our Websites are <http://www.honorflighttwincities.org/> MN Vietnam Veterans Charity [www.veteranscardonations.com](http://www.veteranscardonations.com).

**M- Twin Cities Honor Flight Fundraiser**





**March 1, 2013**

**To all Honor Flight Twin Cities Friends,**

**My name is Chuck Skoglund, and I am involved with the Honor Flight program.**

**The Kysers and I would like to invite you to a FUNDRAISER screening of the documentary "Honor Flight". The film follows four Veterans on their day with Honor Flight as they travel to Washington, DC. It starts with the phone call inviting them on the flight to Washington to tour the Memorials and the welcome home. \$3.00 from each purchased ticket will be donated to Honor Flight Twin Cities for future flights.**

**The film captures what Honor Flight means to the Veterans. How they are so humbled that the program exists, and that we still care about the sacrifices their generation made for our country.**

**Two dates have been secured as the film makes its way across the country.**

**The first is:**

**AMC Rosedale 14, March 11 at 7:30pm**

**It is preferred that Tickets be purchased online at [www.tugg.com/events/2687](http://www.tugg.com/events/2687) in order for us to get the \$3 donation. Tickets are also available at the movie theater.**

**The second showing will be:**

**Carmike Oakdale Stadium 20 Oakdale MN, March 13 at 7:00pm**

**It is preferred that Tickets be purchased online at [www.tugg.com/events/2940](http://www.tugg.com/events/2940) in order for us to get the \$3 donation. Tickets are also available at the theater.**

**There is a two minute trailer of the film at the [tugg.com](http://tugg.com) sight for you to get an idea of the power of the film. Please be assured that purchasing the tickets online through tugg is safe and secure, as ALL showings around the country are processed this way.**

**We hope everyone is able to attend a showing or purchase a ticket online to support the flight and realize what Honor Flight means to our WWII Veterans.**

**Thank You**

**Chuck Skoglund  
Jerry & Jana Kyser**

**M - Holes for Heroes Ice Fishing tournament Saturday 2 Feb 2013**

**I hope you will consider participating in this years Holes for Hero's Ice fishing tournament listed below. The date: Feb 2**

Time: 1-4 pm

Place: Medicine Lake MN

Why: open to general public but serves military community.

Details: Kids friendly, military honoring Ice fishing event with over 10,000 in prizes.

Link to Register: [www.2013holesforheroes.eventbrite.com](http://www.2013holesforheroes.eventbrite.com)

Attached: Poster of event

Questions: Tom Goodrich [Goodykstp@aol.com](mailto:Goodykstp@aol.com) Exec Dir Fishing for Life 612-987-5466  
[fishingforlife.org](http://fishingforlife.org)

**One random fan will receive 2 all day passes to Mall of America's Nickelodean Universe. Must be a Facebook fan to enter. Through the end of January.**

Link: [www.facebook.com/fishingforlife](http://www.facebook.com/fishingforlife)

FOLLOW us on TWITTER

Come follow us on Twitter. One random follower will receive a \$50 Cabela's gift card. Through the end of January.

@Fishathon

<https://twitter.com/fishathon>

**M - The Military Child Education Coalition®(MCEC) is pleased to announce that another no-cost training opportunity has been planned in Minnesota; a Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute February 27 & 28, 2013 in Minneapolis. Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute** MCEC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization, and it performs research, develops resources, conducts professional institutes and conferences, and develops and publishes resources for all constituencies. It is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.

The trainings will be held at the Marriott Minneapolis-Northwest, 7025 Northland Drive North, Minneapolis, MN 55428.

Attached you will find the trainings "Save a date" flyer with additional information. The event is open for registration on MCEC's website ([www.militaryChild.org](http://www.militaryChild.org)).

MCEC is accredited to issue CEUs through IACET (International Association of Continuing Education Training) provider number 1307336 and the National Board of Certified Counselors (provider number 6283). Up to 1.2 Credit /12 hours Continuing Education Credits.

If you cannot attend, please share the news of this opportunity with others in the area who might also benefit from this important and free training session.

Thank you and if I can help you further, please don't hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns.

Myriam Virella  
Professional Development Project Specialist  
Military Child Education Coalition  
909 Mountain Lion Circle, Harker Heights, TX 76548  
Desk (254) 953-1923 x 1119 Fax (254) 953-1925

*Save the Date!*

**You are invited to attend the upcoming *Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute TM(GRI)*.** The Military Child Education Coalition® (MCEC®), a nonprofit organization addressing the educational needs of children in military families, presents the training. The institute focuses on information needed to raise community awareness about the issues faced by children when a parent is deployed. Through a combination of direct instruction, group work and interactive activities, participants develop strategies and the framework of an Action Plan to support the “suddenly military” children.

Log on to [MilitaryChild.org](http://MilitaryChild.org) to register!

### **Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute**

#### ***Date and Time: Place:***

February 27 & 28, 2013 Marriott Minneapolis Northwest

Registration & Breakfast: 8:00 to 8:30 7025 Northland Drive North

Institute Training: 8:30 am—4:00 pm Minneapolis, MN 55428

Including a working lunch

#### ***Learning Outcomes:***

- Recall basic information about the U. S. Military Reserve component (National Guard and Reserves)
- Identify and discuss the effects of mobilization and deployment separation on children of Reserve Component Service Members
- Identify community and military resources and networks that support these military connected children
- Prepare an action plan model designed to encourage the natural resilience of these children in your professional communities

#### ***Cost:***

Funded by Office of the Secretary of Defense/Department of the Army; No Cost to Participants

#### ***Credit Options:***

Participants may apply for Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit up to 1.2 CEU (12 hours = 1.2 CEU) upon completion of training. Completion requirements are:

- Attendance at 95% of the training
- A score of 80% or higher on an end-of-course assessment
- Completion of an end-of-course evaluation

The fee for the CEU credit is \$25.00, payable upon completion of training. Participants may also receive one hour graduate credit from Texas A&M-Central Texas for a fee of \$175.00

#### ***Contact Information:***

For more information about this training, other professional development opportunities, or learner support, please contact Myriam Virella at 254-953-1923 x 1119 or [myriam.virella@militarychild.org](mailto:myriam.virella@militarychild.org).

**“Military Child Education Coalition®,” “MCEC®” and associated trademarks and design elements are owned by the Military Child Education Coalition. © 2012 Military Child Education Coalition. All Rights Reserved**

### **New Tricare Copays go into effect 1 February 2013**

New copayments for prescription drugs covered by TRICARE will go into effect February 1, 2013. The Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act requires TRICARE to increase copays on brand name and non-formulary medications that are not filled at
---

military clinics or hospitals. There is no increase to copays for generic medications. Increases will be effective sometime in February, depending on when system changes can be made, and the publication of a required Federal Notice.

### **Tax Assistance at Military OneSource**

Military.com released earlier this week that Military OneSource and H&R Block have joined forces again to provide a free online tax preparation service for service members. Two services -- basic and premium ---- are provided through H&R Block, with one notable difference. The basic service is free, and the premium service would apply to taxpayers who must file Schedule C returns, generally to report gains or losses from business ownership. All members of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps are eligible to use these services including members of the National Guard and Reserve components, regardless of activation status. Coast Guard reservists activated under Title 10 authority to serve with the Navy also are eligible, and so are spouses and other family members enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. For more information, contact Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>.

### **'Healing Heroes' Helps Military Families**

A new and unique book has just been released that supports MILITARY FAMILIES who are facing changes due to the injury of someone they love. The book "The Healing Heroes Book: Braving the Changes When Someone You Love Is Wounded in Service" is an activity book and valuable tool for military children and families to help them deal with the feelings and challenges, adjust to the changes, and cope when someone they love is wounded in service. You can order the Healing Heroes Book at the <http://www.wateringcanpress.com/html/healingheroesbook.html> for more military family support resources

### **Continuing Education Resources for Veterans**

Active soldiers and veterans are important members of American society: soldiers because they fight to keep the American people safe, and veterans because, additionally, they bring their past experiences and wisdom back to society—which can help catalyze better decisions surrounding war and protection in the future. In 1944, when the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (the G.I. Bill) was created, it was meant to provide benefits to World War II veterans that could help them acclimate back into life outside of fighting. Since then, the bill has grown to focus very heavily on providing subsidies and scholarships for the education and career-based training of America's veterans. However, the G.I. Bill system has been wrought by technological instability, as well as an overwhelming influx of returning veterans seeking its benefits, resulting in late reimbursement. If you are pursuing financial assistance for higher education as a veteran from the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, there are some important things you need to be aware of as you navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). To read the entire article about education resources for Veterans please click here: <http://www.accreditedonlinecolleges.org/resources/veteran-continuing-ed/>

## **'Healing Heroes' Helps Military Families**

A new and unique book has just been released that supports MILITARY FAMILIES who are facing changes due to the injury of someone they love. The book "The Healing Heroes Book: Braving the Changes When Someone You Love Is Wounded in Service" is an activity book and valuable tool for military children and families to help them deal with the feelings and challenges, adjust to the changes, and cope when someone they love is wounded in service. You can order the Healing Heroes Book at the <http://www.wateringcanpress.com/html/healingheroesbook.html> for more military family support resources

## **New Resource Helps Troops, Families Plan Deployments**

Jan 10th it was released that the Defense Department has launched a new resource to help troops and their families plan for the "before, during and after" of deploying.

Barbara Thompson, director of DOD's office for family policy, explained "Plan My Deployment" during an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

"This is a new, interactive, online tool that supports service members and their families as they prepare for the different stages of deployment," she said. The new resource guides users through the "ins and outs" of deployment, Thompson said: from power of attorney and legal assistance considerations to financial and emotional issues. Other tips and tools address education and training benefits, she added.

"We modeled this after the very, very popular 'Plan My Move,' which helps with [permanent change of station] moves," she said. "It's the same kind of approach: we look at providing the tools and information, and you tailor it to your individual family's needs." Plan My Deployment saves the user's information, she said, so people can exit from the site and return at their convenience, picking up where they left off. Though other deployment planning guides and resources already exist, Thompson said, DOD leaders wanted to offer family readiness assistance to the entire active duty, National Guard and Reserve force and their families. To read this entire article, please click: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118960>

## **K9s For Warriors is dedicated to provide service canines to our warriors suffering from post-traumatic stress as a result of conflicts and war after 9/11.**

Since 9/11 and the resulting conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan there are over 500 thousand disabled military warriors. One in five suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. One in six will attempt or commit suicide. Symptoms of PTSD are mental changes, including, but not limited to; hostility, aggression, depression, suicide, paranoia, acrophobia, nightmares, panic attacks, poor coping skills, memory loss, and lack of trust. PTSD affects not only the warriors but their families and the workplace. Studies have proven there are actual physical changes in the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex of the brain adding to the horrific war experiences that warriors have endured.

Service canines are a medically proven recovery aid for our warriors suffering from PTSD. Service canines are considered medical equipment and are recognized by the U. S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, and the American disability act of 1990.

At K9s For Warriors, our philosophy is to involve the veteran in the training of their new service canine partner, allowing them the opportunity to be part of the solution to their recovery. Our academy is staffed by skilled certified canine handlers and trainers. Each academy is three weeks in length where the warrior learns the skills needed to train their own canines. We provide a service canine, training, certification, equipment, seminars, vet

care, most meals, and housing, free of charge. Each warrior is responsible for their own transportation to and from our facility which is located in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Classes are limited to three to five warriors in each session.

K9s For Warriors is supported by The Wounded Warrior Project, Birdies for the Brave, Warrior Gateway, and many other military organizations. We highly recommend each applicant contact one of our many alumni to hear for themselves the positive recovery changes after attending our Academy. We feel the best way to gain the knowledge of our methods, and training techniques is to talk to fellow Veterans for their recommendations. K9s For Warriors will provide such information upon request.

K9s For Warriors will be accepting over thirty warriors for our Academy in a calendar year. Our goal is to help our warriors return to civilian life with dignity and independence. They fought for our tomorrows, we will fight for theirs.

K9s For Warriors  
260 S. Roscoe Blvd  
Ponte Vedra Beach FL 32082

For more information, [please email us](mailto:info@k9sforwarriors.org), or call us at 904.686.1956.

<http://www.k9sforwarriors.org/>

### **Military OneSource Connects Troops, Families to Resources**

The Defense Department (DoD) has revitalized and consolidated the Military OneSource website to better serve military members and their families. Zona Lewis, military community outreach online and resource operations manager, told the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service that the Military OneSource overhaul incorporates new functionalities, enhanced social media platforms and multiple access methods. The revamping comes at the behest of President Barack Obama, who sought an overall reduction of government websites, prompting DoD officials to have Military OneSource absorb MilitaryHomefront. Officials therefore transferred the leadership and service provider information from soon-to-be retired MilitaryHomefront to the Military OneSource umbrella. Military OneSource also provides round-the-clock consultants available worldwide to assist with family life topics ranging from moving to nonmedical counseling referral, including anger management and communication skills. For more information, please see: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118628>

### **Help Dealing with Depression**

Clinical depression is a serious medical condition that, if left untreated, may lead to other complicated medical conditions. Two-thirds of people who suffer from depression do not seek help -- they believe their symptoms are just part of life. Depression can be treated. People do not have to live with depression. Defeat that enemy, get treatment and feel the joy of life again! If you or someone you know is in a crisis, seek help immediately: (1) call 911; (2) visit the emergency room or speak to a healthcare provider; or (3) call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255); TTY 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) to speak with a trained counselor-- this is a 24-hour toll-free hotline provided by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Screening tools, tips and more information about depression can be found at the following websites: (1) Militarymentalhealth at <http://www.militarymentalhealth.org>, (2) Help Yourself.Help Others at <http://www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org>, (3) Screening for Mental Health at



<http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org>, (4) U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Depression/> and (5) the Helpline at <http://www.helpguide.org>.

### **Army Hire a Veteran Program**

The Army's Warrior Transition Command (WTC) recently unveiled its three-pronged Hire a Veteran education campaign plan, which aims to help employers understand that wounded warriors can bring a wealth of leadership experience and skills to the table and to their bottom line. The WTC is producing a video that highlights the incredible value our wounded warriors bring to the civilian workforce given their unique training and experience. The video and an online toolkit are available for download and distribution to HR professionals and employers at the WTC website at <http://www.WTC.Army.mil>. The video, "Hire a Veteran -- Obstacles & Solutions," features the stories of Soldiers who spent more than six months with a Warrior Transition Unit recovering from severe wounds, illness or injuries and how they pulled themselves up and out into the civilian workforce.

### **M - Veteran Pain Program**

BFW Charities is a non-profit organization which operates through three dynamic programs: Furnishing Achievements, Complementary Medical Research and Education, and the Samaritan Group. Each year the Charity helps hundreds of families and individuals in need.

The major initiative of the Charity this year is the Veteran Pain Program, which provides free medical grants to veterans who qualify; helping them return to their daily lives. Funded completely by BFW Charities this program is of no financial obligation to you, the veteran.

We work with state of the art technology to help people get relief from their pain in a timely manner. For more information and to find out if you qualify for a free medical grant, please contact **Chris Barber at 612.290.3300.**

For testimonials visit: <http://bfweducate.com/testimonials>

### **M - Free Veteran Contracting Workshops**

These free workshops will provide information on MnDOT's Veteran program, overview of opportunities with MnDOT and how to verify your veteran-owned business.

Dates & Locations:

Wednesday, December 5  
Eide Bailly LLP  
1911 Excel Drive, Mankato, MN

Thursday, December 6  
Heintz Center, Room HA 122  
1926 College View Road SE, Rochester, MN

Thursday, December 13  
Mid-Central Research & Outreach Center (MCROC)



1802 - 18th Street NE, Willmar, MN

#### Registration & Contact Information

Register online: <http://mnptac.ecenterdirect.com/Conferences.action>

Questions? Contact Alan Duff at [duff@usfamily.net](mailto:duff@usfamily.net) or PTAC Metro Area Manager, Mark Cooper, at [mcooper@mnptac.org](mailto:mcooper@mnptac.org) or call 612-259-6579.

Workshop Agenda (Same for all locations)

12:30 p.m. - Registration

1:00 p.m. - Welcome and Introductions

1:15 p.m. - MnDOT Veteran Outreach Efforts

1:30 p.m. - Veteran Preferences and Opportunities

2:30 p.m. - Doing Business with Prime Contractor

3:00 p.m. - Veteran Verification

3:45 p.m. - Positioning your Firm for Success

4:00 p.m. - Adjourn

#### More About Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

Veteran-owned small businesses are eligible for a 6% preference in the award of MnDOT state-funded projects in accordance with MN Statute 197-447. In addition, MnDOT establishes goals on every state-funded project for prime contractors to sub-contract certain amounts to veteran-owned small businesses. These sub-contracting goals vary depending on the size and location of the project, as well as the identified capacity and expertise available within the veteran community. All veteran-owned small businesses that have been verified by the Veterans Administration are eligible. Businesses that are not verified will not be eligible to participate under the state veteran preference program. Legislation for federally-funded and county-funded -projects follow a different set of rules that change frequently.

#### Say Thank you to Our Troops Today

Thanks-A-Bunch(TM) and Military.com have come together to offer you a unique opportunity to say "thanks" to our troops, our veterans and their families (American Heroes). They are proving an opportunity to give them with a \$50 Thanks-A-Bunch gift card that you can purchase for just \$10, which is also tax deductible. This will help the Servicemember and/or family to help pay for a nice meal out with family and friends. For details about these gift cards, please go to the Thanks-A-Bunch website located at:

<http://www.thanksabunch.org/milcom/?ESRC=mrvr.nl>

#### New Program to Help Transition Process

Servicemembers will soon get more help transitioning from military to civilian life. On 21 November, the Veterans Opportunity to Work or VOW to Hire Heroes Act will require every Soldier attend the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). What can Soldiers expect to see when the VOW Act is implemented? The initial TAP will feature pre-separation classes ranging from health care, life insurance and disability to higher education, vocational training and home loans. Parts of the VOW Act will be implemented in phases until the end of 2014. By the end of 2013, Transition Goals-Plans-Success (GPS) will replace TAP. GPS will be a classroom and one-on-one session with Servicemembers and their spouses to formulate a plan, including a detailed budget. For more information, please see: <http://www.military.com/military-transition>

#### New Rules Help Troops Gain Commercial Driver's Licenses

Servicemembers who are licensed to drive a range of military vehicles now have an advantage gaining a

commercial driver's license. In 2011, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration enacted the commercial learner's permit rule. It allows states to substitute two years of safe driving experience in qualifying military vehicles for the skills-test portion of the commercial driver's license test. The Military Commercial Driver's License Act of 2012, which took effect in October, adds another boost for Servicemembers with military licenses who seek civilian credentials. The new legislation permits states to issue commercial driver's licenses to members of the Armed Forces who are stationed in a state, but not a resident of that state. To learn more about these rules, please see:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118467>

### **GED Test Available for Servicemembers**

The GED test is now available on an after-the-fact reimbursement basis to eligible military personnel. To find the closest official GED testing center, visit the GED Testing Service website at

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/locate-a-testing-center>. Test Control Officers may download the GED Reimbursement Request (DANTES Form 1560/47) from DANTES TCO Portal at <http://www.dantes-tco.com/>. For more information visit the DANTES Examination Programs GED Web page at <http://www.dantes.doded.mil>.

### **Trained Dogs Help Veterans Suffering From PTSD**

An estimated one in five veterans deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001 has or will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or major depression. What these Servicemembers need is a service dog, said Debra Schaser, founder of Canine Hearing Companions in Vineland, N.J. Used traditionally for blind, deaf or physically disabled patients, service dogs have only recently been trained to perform tasks that can improve PTSD symptoms, such as create a buffer in public places or wake a veteran from a nightmare. Although veterans would possibly benefit from service dogs, few veterans are able to afford such companionship. This, in turn, led to the creation of Vets Helping Heroes, a charitable foundation that raises money to provide service dogs to disabled veterans. For a better understanding of this topic, please see:

<http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/11/gannett-dogs-help-veterans-cope-ptsd-111212/>

### **Website Informs Employers Seeking to Hire Veterans**

The Labor Department (DoL), in concert with two other federal agencies, has provided a tool to guide potential employers seeking to hire disabled veterans, the "America's Heroes at Work" website. This website provides resources to organizations looking to hire veterans with or without disabilities. It guides employers to understand the disabilities and potential accommodations that may be necessary, and how they can be made. In addition to giving employers toolkits and information about veteran disabilities, the website also emphasizes the advantages of hiring veterans, whether they have these disabilities or not. Read details at: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118684>

### **Military Crisis Line: Support Whenever You Need It**

During the holiday season if you or someone you know is struggling with a relationship, anxiety or other personal issues help is available. Servicemembers, along with their loved ones can go to the Military Crisis Line for free, confidential support 24/7. The Military Crisis Line is staffed by caring, qualified responders from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), many who have served in the Military themselves. They understand what Servicemembers have been through and the challenges members of the Military and their

loved ones face. The Military Crisis Line, online chat, and text are free to all Service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserves, and Veterans, even if you are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. For more information about the crisis support, go to:

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ActiveDuty.aspx>

### **Homes for Heroes®, The Company**

*Our mission is to provide extraordinary savings to local heroes who provide extraordinary services to our community every day.*

Homes for Heroes® is a company that affiliates with Realtors®, lenders and other real estate-related service providers who offer substantial rebates and discounts to the Heroes who serve our nation and its communities every day. Our Heroes include military personnel, firefighters, law enforcement officers and others who make our communities a better place to live.

This program was created after the tragic events of 9/11 as a “Thank you” to the men and women who have given so much. Heroes across the country register on our website every day looking for the savings. We match them with Homes for Heroes® Affiliates in their area. Homes for Heroes® is now expanding its discounts beyond the home buying and selling process with our Friends of Heroes® program.

### **Service Deserves Its Rewards®**

**Homes for Heroes® is here to say "Thank you!"**

<http://www.homesforheroes.com/>

### **M - Ensure the financial success of your company.**

**Profit Mastery®: Creating Value and Building Wealth**

Driving financial performance in your business is crucial. Profit Mastery® provides business owners and key managers with action steps to improve profitability and efficiency. This internationally-acclaimed and powerful program uses case studies and a down-to-earth style — with just a bit of humor and a touch of motivation. You will never look at your financial statements in the same way.

In this hands-on workshop, you'll cover:

- Overcoming common business problems
- Understanding your financial position
- Using tools to take active control
- Making effective pricing decisions
- Evaluating cost patterns
- Making your business bankable
- Avoiding cash crunches
- Planning for transition
- Putting it all together

**Normally at \$595, this course is being offered at  
NO COST TO VETERANS AND/OR THEIR SPOUSES.**

**Business/Public: \$249** (Thanks to a grant from U.S. Bank)

**WHEN:** December 3, 5, 10 & 12

3:00 – 7:00 PM.

**WHERE:** Minnesota State University, Mankato

Centennial Student Union, Room 238

Parking in Visitors Lot #4 (Parking passes will be provided)

**Online Self-Study Option also available.**

Contact Julie Nelson at the Small Business Development Center,  
507-389-8875 or [julie.nelson@mnsu.edu](mailto:julie.nelson@mnsu.edu) to register.

**Continuing Education Credit:** Participants will receive 16 continuing education contact hours.

This course qualifies for 16 hours of CPE credits for CPAs.

Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and regional support partners. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the program sponsors. Programs are open to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Contact the SBDC at 507-389-8875.

### **New app for locating graves at Arlington National Cemetery**

Arlington National Cemetery has released a new application allowing smartphone users and Web browsers to locate graves and other sites around the cemetery.

Michelle Miley, right, from Leesburg, and her mother Christa Miley from Louisiana place flowers at the grave of Vietnam and Korean War veteran Robert D. Miley, father of Michelle and husband of Christa Miley, at Arlington National Cemetery on Veterans Day. (Astrid Riecken - FOR THE WASHINGTON POST) [ANC Explorer](#) allows users to see front-and-back photos of a headstone or monument and get directions to these locations.

**This free app, released Monday, is now available on [Arlington's Web site](#), the iTunes store and Google Play.** It is also loaded on new kiosks at Arlington National Cemetery's Visitors Center.

"ANC Explorer is another milestone in our transformation," Kathryn A. Condon, executive director of the Army National Military Cemeteries, said in a statement. "There isn't a national cemetery that is as technologically advanced as Arlington – both in day-to-day operations and how it connects to its families and visitors."

The effort stems from reforms undertaken after disclosures of [poor record-keeping and incorrectly marked gravesites](#) at the cemetery.

As part of the accountability effort, the Army photographed 259,978 gravesites, niches and markers using a custom-built smart phone application, according to cemetery officials. Each headstone photo was compared with existing cemetery records and other historical documents to verify the information.

The end result was the creation of a single, verifiable and authoritative database of all those laid to rest at Arlington that is linked to the Arlington's digital mapping system, according to a statement from the cemetery.

Eventually, ANC Explorer will offer features such as emergency and event notifications, restroom and water fountain locations, shuttle stops, and self-guided tours.

"This is just the beginning," said Maj. Nicholas R. Miller, chief information officer for the cemetery.

### **M - Online Interactive Career Workshop For Veterans**

Are you unsure about your career and education goals? Are you thinking about using military education benefits to pay for college? Not sure where to start? To assist you, Minnesota Online, in partnership with [MyMilitaryEducation.org](http://MyMilitaryEducation.org) is offering a **free** online career workshop for Veterans, service members and their families.

- Gain more knowledge about your interests, personality, career values and skills and how they relate to possible careers.
- Learn how your military experience can relate to civilian careers.
- Compare potential careers and required skills, market outlook, salary and work descriptions.
- Explore academic programs and majors to prepare you for possible careers.
- Learn how to set SMART goals to achieve your objectives.
- Create a GPS LifePlan eFolio.

When: **November 5 - November 16, 2012**

How to Register: [Register Online](#) (Deadline to register October 31)

For more information contact our Counselor, [Jennifer Parta Arno](#).

Requirements: **You** - a mind ready to learn - some time! (Plan on a time commitment of 2-4 hours)

This workshop will be entirely online - Login and course information will be emailed to you the first day of the workshop.

### ***VA, DoD Update Benefits Portal***

eBenefits is a joint VA/DoD web portal that provides resources and self-service capabilities to Veterans, Service members, and their families to research, access and manage their VA and military benefits and personal information. eBenefits uses secure credentials to allow access to personal information and gives users the ability to perform numerous self-service functions. It also provides a list of links to other sites that provide information about military and Veteran benefits. It is an essential way for Veterans, Service members, and their families to receive access to and service from VA and DoD.

[Learn more](#)

### **App to Access TRICARE Pharmacy Benefits**

TRICARE beneficiaries have new pharmacy options available and accessible in the palm of their hand just by using TRICARE pharmacy contractor Express Script's enhanced mobile application. The new additions let beneficiaries use their smartphone to safely and securely manage their TRICARE pharmacy benefit. The updated app includes medication reminders and an account registration tool. The updated app includes medication reminders and an account registration tool. The Express Rx mobile app gives beneficiaries access to their prescription information anytime, anywhere. Smartphone users can download the app for free by going to [www.express-scripts.com/mobile](http://www.express-scripts.com/mobile) or using services like the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace. The mobile-optimized pharmacy website is accessible at <http://m.esrx.com>.

### **eBenefits Simplifies Access to Resources and Benefits**

There are many benefits and services provided to military personnel and their families. Yet accessing these programs, learning about requirements and effectively using the benefits that you have earned may require a good deal of effort, as well as a bit of patience. To streamline the process, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) have created eBenefits, an online web portal that

provides benefit-related resources and tools for veterans, Servicemembers and their families. eBenefits is a one-stop web portal that enables veterans and Servicemembers to access personal information and carry out tasks so they can use benefits. It's easy-to-navigate format and topical options offer a more efficient system for managing eligible benefits and accessing services from a single portal. For details: <http://bit.ly/QKZcvC>

### **Roth Contributions to Open to All Active-duty Troops**

According to Defense Financing and Accounting Service (DFAS) officials, beginning 1 October 2012, active-duty members of the Army, Navy and Air Force will be able to contribute to the Roth Thrift Savings Plan as part of their investment planning. Active-duty Servicemembers also can start their Roth TSP contributions now through their online MyPay accounts, or by submitting a TSP-U-1 form to their finance office. Active-duty Marines, Guardsmen, reservists and civilians paid by DFAS were able to begin making contributions to the program in June. Additionally, other branches of the National Guard and Reserve will be able to make Roth TSP contributions by mid- to late 2013. For further information, please click: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118052>

### **Online Toolkit Aims to Support Mental Health Providers Serving Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed a new online Community Provider Toolkit located at: [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders) aimed at delivering support, therapeutic tools, and resources to community providers treating Veterans for mental health concerns. This toolkit will enable those community providers who treat Veterans to better understand the specific issues Veterans face and help them access VA resources. The goal of the Community Provider Toolkit is to further enhance the delivery of mental health services to Veterans through increased communication and coordination of care between community providers and VA. Those interested in further information can go to <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Soldiers and families in need of crisis assistance can contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Trained consultants are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and can be contacted by dialing 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and pressing "1" for Military members and Veterans or by visiting their website at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

The Army's comprehensive list of **Suicide Prevention Program** information is located at <http://www.preventsuicide.army.mil>.

### **TRICARE Requires Electronic Payments**

To avoid losing coverage, beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) or TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) who pay monthly premiums by check need to switch to an electronic form of payment before 1 January 2013. Beginning 1 January 2013, TRICARE will only accept monthly premium payments using recurring automatic payments by credit or debit card, or by recurring electronic funds transfer (EFT) from a linked bank account. Beneficiaries can contact their regional contractor to set up automatic payments and obtain more information. Contact information for each region is available at the TRICARE Contacts



webpage at <http://www.TRICARE.mil/contacts>. For more information about TRS or TRR, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil>.

## Help for Depression

October is National Depression Education and Awareness Month. Depression is a very common condition affecting more than 20 million adults in the United States each year. Depression is treatable and beatable. If you or someone you know is in a crisis, seek help immediately: (1) call 911; (2) visit the emergency room or speak to a healthcare provider; or (3) call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255); TTY 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) to speak with a trained counselor-- this is a 24-hour toll-free hotline provided by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Screening tools, tips and more information about depression can be found at the following websites: (1) Militarymentalhealth at <http://www.militarymentalhealth.org>, (2) Help Yourself.Help Others at [www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org](http://www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org), (3) Screening for Mental Health at <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org>, (4) U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Depression/> and (5) the Helpguide at <http://www.helpguide.org>.

## M - Minneapolis VA to Host Seminar on Starting Your Own Business

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System in partnership with Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) will host a one-day seminar "Starting Your Own Business" for veterans and military service members on Oct. 20. The event is free but registration is required. The seminar will offer valuable tips on: business plans, sales and marketing, banking/financing, Government contracting, legal Issues, management and human resources, insurance and risk management and financial reporting. The seminar will be held 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the auditorium of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55117. To register, contact: John Merladet at 612-467-1547

## TRICARE on Preparing for Emergencies

September is also National Preparedness Month. TRICARE urges beneficiaries to stay prepared for tropical storms, hurricanes, and other emergencies. In the case of evacuations, the TRICARE pharmacy program may authorize early refills for prescriptions. The TRICARE disaster information page at <http://www.tricare.mil/disasterinfo> offers updated information, along with TRICARE announcements. Additionally, it provides handy lists of what people may need to access health care. Contact numbers for health care support can be found at the TRICARE Contacts webpage at <http://www.tricare.mil/contacts>. Information and tips on disaster preparedness can be found at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) website at <http://www.ready.gov> while the National Hurricane Center offers the latest news at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>.

## Family Matters Blog: Managing Military ID Cards Just Got Easier

The Defense Manpower Data Center is making it easier for Servicemembers and their families to get and maintain identification cards. The center has launched its Real-time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPID), a self-service portal to allow anyone with the Defense Department's common access card, or CAC to apply for family ID or retirement cards or update dependents' statuses online. The change may seem procedural, but its impact will be big for those who, without it, have had to spend countless hours waiting in line with their families to get ID cards. Before RAPIDS, Servicemembers, retirees and families had to go together to a Defense Manpower Data Center to submit an application form and wait while the ID



card is being made. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117899>

### **Program Eases Voting for Military Families**

Federal voting officials want to ensure that Servicemembers and their families are prepared for their votes to be counted. The Federal Voting Assistance Program has made the voting process easier for Americans serving overseas. The website includes a tab for each state's deadlines for registering to vote and casting absentee ballots. Additionally, it has online registration and absentee ballot assistance, and includes a mobile app. If you prefer to go in person, there are 221 installation voting offices, all of which the program supports. The Military Postal Service Agency provides free, expedited ballot delivery and ballot tracking to your local election office for overseas-based Servicemembers and their families. Go to your local post office or postal clerk, use the Label 11 DOD form on your absentee ballot envelope and mail it. Go to <http://www.usps.com> to track the status of your ballot, according to the program's website. In order to view this entire article, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117826>

### **New DOD Safe Helpline Mobile App Now Available**

The Department of Defense (DoD) announced its new DoD Safe Helpline Mobile application. With this new app, Servicemembers transitioning to civilian life will have access to critical resources that assists in managing the short and long-term effects of sexual assault. The DoD Safe Helpline Mobile App is free and available for download from the Apple and Android app stores. DoD administers Safe Helpline via a contract with the non-profit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. To learn more, please go to: <http://thankyouforyourservice.us/issue/september-2012/article/new-dod-safe-helpline-mobile-app-now-available>

### **Army and Air Force Exchange to Salute Those 'Still Serving'**

As part of its annual "Still Serving" weekend, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) will salute former Soldiers and Airmen by offering unique specials and events at Exchanges worldwide, 5-11 October. Army and Air Force retirees will receive a flyer featuring exclusive savings on a wide variety of products, including deals at the food court. Additionally, local Exchanges will honor the service of retirees with "Still Serving" celebrations to include fashion shows, door prizes, health clinics and much more. Additionally, AAFES online store, <http://www.shopmyexchange.com>, will offer 10 percent off any order of \$100 or more to shoppers who sign up for the "Online Savings Club E-newsletter," which offers online savings and exclusive discounts. You may sign up for this E-newsletter at: <http://bit.ly/RwhsEU>. To learn more about activities planned for the weekend of 5 October, contact information for all Army and Air Force Exchanges can be found online at <http://www.shopmyexchange.com> through the "Store Locator" link.

### **M - Minneapolis VA opens Community Resource and Referral Center**

Grand opening ribbon cutting at the new Community Resource and Referral Center in downtown Minneapolis

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System has opened a Community Resource and Referral Center at 1201 Harmon Place in Downtown Minneapolis.

The center -- one of 17 such centers opening around the country -- is part of the VA plan to end homelessness among veterans by 2015.

On any given night, there are about 700 homeless veterans living in Minnesota.

The center offers primary care and mental health counseling. Case managers are on site to assist with accessing services such as housing, jobs and education.

The center has showers, laundry machines and computers. It is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The CRRC is near downtown Minneapolis to make it easy to access other organizations. In addition to housing 30 VA staff, local community partners will also have office space in the center.

The center began operations on Sept. 18. A dedication event was held Sept. 17; it was attended by more than 200 veterans, elected officials, partners and VA staff

### **Top Tips for Disposing Old Meds—Properly**

Did you know your medicine cabinet, filled with old prescription bottles, could be a danger to others in your house—even your pets?

This is why proper disposal of unused medications is so important. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) developed guidelines for this very reason.

### **How to PROPERLY Get Rid of Meds**

The FDA has [guidelines](#) to help you properly dispose of old medications. These guidelines are handy to keep around. In summary, here are the FDA recommendations on tossing those olds meds:

1. Look on the drug label for specific disposal instructions ... and follow them.
2. If your neighborhood or city offers a community drug take-back program, use it. These programs allow the public to take unused meds to a central location for proper disposal. Your city or county trash and recycling department will know if your neighborhood has such a program.
3. If no instructions are available on the drug label, and your community doesn't offer a take-back program, throw your meds in the trash. BUT FIRST:
  - ▲ Take them out of their containers and mix them with another trash item, such a kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
  - ▲ Seal them in a bag or empty can to prevent the drugs from leaking out of the garbage bag.
4. If you're still unsure about proper disposal, call your local pharmacist.

Remember: never give your old medications to friends. Your doctor prescribed those drugs for you, and only you. Once you're done with them, it's best to dispose of them.

### **National Take-Back Initiative 2012**

After successful events in the past two years, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has scheduled another National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on Sat., Sept. 29, 2012. The initiative will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

“This is a great opportunity for those who missed the previous events, or who have subsequently accumulated unwanted, unused prescription drugs, to safely dispose of those medications,” the DEA says on its website.

If you're interested, visit the DEA's [National Take-Back Initiative website](#) to find a collection site near you.

### [Combat Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

Welcome to Combat Veterans with PTSD

[A Collection of Resources, Blogs, and Peer-to-Peer Support Dedicated to Ensuring No Veteran with PTSD Gets Left Behind](#)

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

### **Touch.Nology**

The Department of Defense, DCoE's resilience and prevention subject matter expert conducted a thorough review of the concept and has kept the information in their database should a DoD stakeholder be interested in the idea. The Army continues to seek out ways to better support "resiliency", "connection", and "support" in support of the families. To support these requirements, "Touch.Nology" has a proven system/product that meets and exceeds requirements in these critical areas for the families of our great Army, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Army National Guard, & Army Reserve. They are used with the Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard Service as well as the Naval Special Warfare Family Support and Children's Programs. There are specific kits for: Deployed Soldiers, Family & Friends, Children ages 3-18, Youth (Teenagers), Families with wounded Soldiers, Basic Training Kits and Family Reconnection post deployment (Strong Bonds). For more information: <http://www.touch-nology.com/>.

### **Financial App for Military Families**

The McGraw-Hill Companies (NYSE: MHP), in partnership with Better Business Bureau (BBB), has launched a free mobile app designed to help America's military families make better personal decisions to ensure their financial independence. The Military & Money App is the first financial educational app that provides Servicemembers and their spouses easy-to-use and practical money management tips, including tools to reduce debt and maximize savings. The Military & Money App is available free on iTunes. A companion website can be found at MilitaryAndMoney.com at <http://www.militaryandmoney.com>.

## **Tax Credit for Minnesota Veterans- Expires in October**

Please help get the word out about the “credit for military service in a combat zone.” If you know of a soldier or Veteran from Minnesota who served in a combat zone or hazardous duty area during 2008, they are eligible for a refundable tax credit that could be worth hundreds of dollars. Unfortunately, that tax credit expires on October 15, 2012, and thousands of soldiers and Veterans who qualify have not yet taken advantage of this benefit.

As part of a tax credit that was enacted in 2006, the Minnesota Department of Revenue is paying \$59 per month served in a combat zone or hazardous duty area during 2008 (the credit extends beyond 2008, but the credit that applies to 2008 is the part that will expire in October). To be eligible, individuals must have served in a combat zone or hazardous duty area at some point in 2008, and Minnesota must have been his or her home state at the time. Minnesota Department of Revenue Commissioner Myron Frans is urging all eligible Minnesota Veterans to claim this tax credit, as well as for anyone who knows an eligible Veteran to pass this information along to him or her.

For more information, you call (651) 556-4710 or email [military.tax@state.mn.us](mailto:military.tax@state.mn.us). The application is form M-99, Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone. Information on the credit, as well as the M-99, is available at the Department of Revenue website below. Forms must be postmarked by October 15 to receive the tax credit.

[http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/individuals/individ\\_income/Pages/Credit\\_for\\_Military\\_Service\\_in\\_a\\_Combat\\_Zone.aspx](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/individuals/individ_income/Pages/Credit_for_Military_Service_in_a_Combat_Zone.aspx)

## **Heroes Program Helps Families Travel**

The Defense Department (DoD) and Fisher House Foundation have teamed up to oversee the Hotels for Heroes program, which allows the American public to donate their unused hotel reward points to families of wounded warriors so that they might stay for free in hotels around the country while their family member receives medical treatment. Some families must travel to locations without one of the 57 Fisher Houses, or where they are full, as the houses near large military medical centers fill up quickly and often have to travel. However, the success of this program, Hero Miles, has allowed them to give away more than 30,000 plane tickets since it was created in 2003. Six major hotel companies which include Marriott, Wyndham, Best Western, Starwood, AmericInn and Choice Privileges Hotels, are participating in the program. People can donate points by going to their hotel rewards club website, which has a tab for Fisher House donations. For further information about these programs, please go to: <http://bit.ly/P28dyz>

**M - Giving Veterans a Lift- Free forklift training - see attached flyer**





## GIVING VETERANS A LIFT!

### Operator Safety Training Military Discount Program



Did you know that operators of powered industrial trucks must be fully trained and employer certified as required by OSHA federal regulation? As part of the regulation, truck operators are required to complete formal classroom training, practical hands-on training and evaluation.

Now, through Toyota's dealer network, ~~discounted~~ forklift operator safety training is available for military veterans.\* **FREE!**

**Military veterans receive \$200 off the advertised price!**

Contact us today, to get more information about operator safety training for veterans and our other training programs.

Toyota Lift of Minnesota  
8601 Xylon Court North  
Brooklyn Park MN  
763-315-9288  
service@toyotaequipment.com  
www.ToyotaEquipment.com

Help America's heroes find employment by supporting Hire Heroes USA, a nonprofit dedicated to helping America's veterans find employment.

<http://www.hireheroesusa.org/>.

\*Veteran will be required to show a DD214 form to qualify. Discount only applies to Operator Safety Training. Offer expires Dec. 31, 2012. Training must occur by January 31, 2013.



## **Operation Purple Healing Adventures Family Retreats**

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is accepting applications for its Operation Purple Healing Adventures Family Retreats for wounded warriors and their families. These family camps are for active duty or medically-retired service members who were wounded or experienced emotional trauma or illness related to their service in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Members of the National Guard and Reserve may be in either activated or drilling status, provided their injury was sustained while on active duty. Food, lodging, and activities are all provided to families at no cost. Camp locations provide activities in an outdoor setting designed to celebrate rediscovering family fun and togetherness after an injury. The program includes both family-focused activities and the opportunity for parents to relax and enjoy quiet time while their children participate in exciting outdoor exploration supervised by camp counselors. Families find strength in making new friends with others who share their experience and by participating in activities aimed at building connections and family closeness. To visit our website for more information and to apply: <http://www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/operation-purple/wounded-warriors-families/>.

## **Money App Puts Finances in Hand**

The ins and outs of getting and staying in good financial shape can feel like a full-time job. From buying a house to researching tax breaks to asking about lower interest rates on credit cards or auto insurance, getting smart about finances takes effort. That endeavor can be made easier, however, with a free website and app created especially for military members by the Better Business Bureau and McGraw Hill Companies. Read about it at:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117540>

## **TRICARE Offers Home Delivery**

TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery program growth continues to soar in 2012 by offering a safe, affordable and convenient way to get prescriptions delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. One of the most popular features is the automatic prescription refill option, which ensures patients do not run out of their medications. Home delivery is also safe, automatically checking medical and prescription history to help prevent harmful drug interactions. Beneficiaries can find links to sign up for TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or enroll their existing home delivery prescriptions in the automatic prescription refill program at [www.tricare.mil/homedelivery](http://www.tricare.mil/homedelivery) or call toll free at 1-877-363-1303. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.military.com/military-report/tricare-offers-home-delivery?ESRC=miltrip.nl>

## **Express Mail for Military Ballots**

Effective Sept. 1, 2012, through Nov. 30, 2012, customers can mail their Casted Absentee Ballots back to the United States for free using express mail military service. To receive this free service, customers must present absentee ballots at a post office finance window to receive a copy of the express mail 11-DoD label. The express mail label includes a tracking number customers can use to track the status of ballots on the Postal Service website. This service is only available to citizens who are casting votes by absentee ballot and cannot be used for other voting material mailings. All

American citizens overseas, regardless of status, are authorized to use this free service and the military postal system to mail absentee ballots at any military post office. For the Postal Service website, please go to: <https://tools.usps.com/go/TrackConfirmAction%21input.action>

### **Voting Program Launches Website for Smartphones**

Servicemembers, their families and U.S. citizens living overseas now have voting information at their fingertips with the Federal Voting Assistance program's new mobile website. The site provides an interface that quickly leads users to voting information in an easy-to-read, mobile-friendly format. The site connects voters with the latest news alerts, absentee voting information, state election dates, key contact information, and answers to frequently asked questions. Users also can sign up for FVAP's voting alerts. The site connects voters with the latest news alerts, absentee voting information, state election dates, key contact information, and answers to frequently asked questions. Users will be directed automatically to the mobile website when they visit FVAP.gov from a mobile browser. For more information, please click

: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117656>

### **M - Welcoming applications for Fall IT-Ready Apprentices Program**

#### **We've Got An App(rentice) For That! Find your next star IT employee!**

The IT-Ready Apprentices Program is a charitable initiative of the Creating IT Futures Foundation, a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible organization established in 1998 by CompTIA, the IT Industry Association. Creating IT Futures Foundation • c/o CompTIA • 3500 Lacey Road, Suite 100 • Downer's Grove, IL 60515  
Feel good about providing someone a career path in the IT field.

#### **Have your company host an IT-Ready Apprentice.**

##### **IT-Ready Apprentices are:**

##### **Easy-to-Implement**

Apprentices work for you for six months. There's no obligation to hire full-time. Training and support services are managed by the Foundation.

##### **Cost-Effective**

Recruitment, assessment, background checks, training and certification are all paid for by our Foundation.

##### **CompTIA A+ Certified**

Proven technical capabilities, plus apprentices will have free access to online training for additional certifications while on the job.

##### **Ready for IT Support Positions**

Our apprentices are prepared for call centers, help desks, desktop support and other roles in IT.

##### **A Good Fit for Your Company**

We select individuals who will get along well with others, who love to solve problems and who have a strong work ethic.

##### **A Career in IT Changes Everything**

##### **Reserve Your IT-Ready Apprentice Now**

Cincinnati • Houston • Kansas City • San Antonio • Minneapolis/St. Paul

If your company is located in one of our five target locations in 2012, please contact us to learn more:

Amy Spear, Program Manager: [aspear@comptia.org](mailto:aspear@comptia.org) / (630) 678-8411 [www.ITready.com](http://www.ITready.com)

IT-Ready Apprentices are individuals who are unemployed or underemployed. Among those we specifically recruit for apprentice training are military veterans and their spouses, women, African-Americans and Hispanics.

#### **We've Got An App(rentice) For That! Find your next star IT employee!**



The IT-Ready Apprentice Program is a charitable initiative of the Creating IT Futures Foundation, a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible organization established in 1998 by CompTIA, the IT Industry Association.

Creating IT Futures Foundation • c/o CompTIA • 3500 Lacey Road, Suite 100 • Downer's Grove, IL 60515

**IT-Ready Apprentices are:**

**Easy-to-Implement** Apprentices work for you for six months. There's no obligation to hire full-time. Training and support services are managed by the Foundation.

**Cost-Effective** Recruitment, assessment, background checks, training and certification are all paid for by our Foundation.

**CompTIA A+ Certified** Proven technical capabilities, plus apprentices will have free access to online training for additional certifications while on the job.

**Ready for IT Support Positions** Our apprentices are prepared for call centers, help desks, desktop support and other roles in IT.

**A Good Fit for Your Company** We select individuals who will get along well with others, who love to solve problems and who have a strong work ethic.

A Career in IT Changes Everything

**Reserve Your IT-Ready Apprentice Now**

Cincinnati • Houston • Kansas City • San Antonio • Minneapolis/St. Paul

If your company is located in one of our five target locations in 2012,

please contact us to learn more: Amy Spear, Program Manager:

[aspear@comptia.org](mailto:aspear@comptia.org) / (630) 678-8411. Feel good about providing someone a career path in the IT field.

**Have your company host an IT-Ready Apprentice.** [www.ITready.com](http://www.ITready.com)

IT-Ready Apprentices are individuals who are unemployed or underemployed.

Among those we specifically recruit for apprentice training are military veterans and their spouses, women, African-Americans and Hispanics.

**M - "From Soldier to Civilian & Beyond" A Job Hunt Webinar Series for veterans**

A special offer for THRIVE veterans in transition

**WHERE:** Any computer with internet connection

**WHEN:** 10-11am, 4 Wednesdays in a row

**August 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd**

**COST: FREE** for veterans (Retail \$450)

*"Our nation's heroes deserve the very best. This is it!"*

Brad Nelson, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army Reserve (Retired),

Vietnam Era and Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran

Made possible through THRIVE Veteran Employment Initiative

**Register:** <http://www.arbez.com/calendar>

**SEATS ARE LIMITED: Register NOW!**

<http://www.arbez.com/calendar>

**The Job Hunt Webinar Series:**

• The Job Hunt Coaching System online

• 4-part webinar series

Are you getting lost in translation? We can help!

When it comes to finding the right job or career path for you, one size does not fit all. We'll help you find *your* voice, *your* path and *your* place in the civilian world. We pack 15 years of proven success getting people hired into an easy, effective & inspiring blended learning experience.

**SEATS ARE LIMITED: Register NOW!**

**4-Part Webinar Series**

What to expect.

Whether you are embarking on a civilian career for the very first time, hoping to restart a career you put on hold for the military or just want a new job, this course will help you discover the possibilities AND the path. From A to Z.

### **Part One: Isolate Your Target** (Know what you want)

Where your passion, talent & experience collide, there is a dream job waiting for you. In this inspiring kick-off course, you'll learn how to ...

- Top 10 confessions from the hiring side of the desk
- Personal assessment / inventory (set the stage for success)
- Identify your strengths and transferable (marketable) skills
- Discover the possibilities (match your military skills to civilian occupations).
- Reality check: Identify the gaps (if any) between your dream job and your skills & experience
- Isolate your target (set your target job(s), industries and companies)

### **Part Two: Tell a Compelling Story** (Stand out from the herd)

You may not like it, but you already know it: a big part of job hunting is knowing how to sell yourself to potential employers. We'll show you how to hit the streets with confidence (and stand out from the herd) every time. You'll learn how to ...

- Write a resume that works
- Tell me about yourself (in person, online and on paper)

**SEATS ARE LIMITED: Register NOW!** [www.arbez.com/calendar](http://www.arbez.com/calendar)

- Tell a compelling story (in 30 seconds or less)
- Use social media (like LinkedIn, Facebook & Twitter) to help you ... not hurt you

### **Part Three: Get a Game Plan / Network for Success!**

Contrary to popular opinion, the toughest (and most critical!) part of finding a job is not writing a resume, networking or even interviewing; it's knowing *what* to do and *when* to do it. Get out of your head and into the right kind of action. In this action-packed session, you'll learn how to ...

- Create a daily job hunt action plan (that works for *you*)
- Find the hidden jobs (Less than 20% of jobs are filled online. Work smart ... not hard!)
- Network for success

### **Part Four: Interview to Win**

You've come this far. Don't leave your interview success to chance!

- Confessions from the other side of the hiring desk
- The three things every interview wants to know (and how to give it to them)
- How to prepare for any job interview
- How to follow up and be their #1 pick

About your instructor: Catherine Byers Breet (Chief Stripe Changer, ARBEZ, [www.arbez.com](http://www.arbez.com)) brings 15 years of proven expertise getting people hired. She'll give you the tools, confidence & inspiration you need to break through the barriers and land your dream job – FASTER. She's helped thousands land their dream job. Let her help you! Active in the community, she is a founding member of the THRIVE Veteran Employment Initiative and the Easter Job Transitions Group.

### **The online**

#### **Job Hunt Coaching System**

What's inside ...

This online video course will meet you in your pajamas!

“As a Naval Officer of over 28 years (16 years reserve), I have had the experience of transitioning in and out of jobs. **Catherine's program is outstanding, particularly for former military.**” –

- Paul Bill, Commander, USN ... now Navy Programs, Bus. Dev. for BAE

A taste of what you'll find ...

- The job hunt scorecard (compare potential jobs against what *you* want)
- Top ten do's and don'ts
- Networking scripts (what to say, online and in person)
- How to work smart with recruiters (what they will and will not do for you)

- Toughest interview questions (and how to answer them)
- How to handle references (and help them to help you!)
- How to talk about money (and not leave any on the table)
- What to do when you don't hear back (after an interview)
- How to negotiate for what you want (from money to job title and schedule to benefits)
- How to launch for success (and keep your job!)

How it works

This online job hunt system serves as the framework for the 4-part webinar series. It's available through any internet connection, 24 hours a day. This "job hunt coach in a bottle" delivers 29 worksheets and 49 short, inspiring video courses on every aspect of your job search. From A ("I need a job!") to Z ("Wow! I got the job! Now what?") ... and everything in between.

Why it works

- It's proven. *"It worked! Everything you taught worked within 3 weeks!"* – Carol C.
- It's step by step. *"Everyone else tells me what to do, You show me how ..."* – Steve B.
- It's easy. *"This program ROCKS! Concise, insightful, and easy to execute!"* – Jennifer F.
- It's inspiring. *"The video made the difference! Your voice ... kept me going."* – Catherine C.
- You don't know what you don't know. We do. *"You know what it takes to get hired! It shows."*

**SEATS ARE LIMITED: Register NOW!** <http://www.arbez.com/calendar>

### **Military.com Launches Military Transition Cente**

Military.com announced the launch of their online Military Transition Center today, which features revolutionary personalized checklists to guide a member through transition even before they begin their separation process from the military. Designed to be the first place a military member goes to plan their transition, members input their estimated separation date and will then receive scheduled email notifications with checklists to help them prepare for their exit from the military due to retirement, separation, or a move to the National Guard or reserves. The checklists not only help to ensure the member is on track for planning for their future, but provide valuable information on healthcare, benefits, relocation, translating military skills for potential civilian employers and resume writing assistance. This tool was built to bridge the communication and cultural gap between the military and civilian worlds. Read more at: <http://on.mktw.net/LiFDty>

### **TRICARE Online Expands Capability**

A newly upgraded feature on TRICARE Online at <http://www.tricareonline.com> now allows users to access expanded personal health data, including lab results, patient histories and diagnoses, and provider visits. These features expand the current Blue Button capability, which already allowed beneficiaries to, safely and securely, access and print or save their demographic information, and allergy or medication profiles. TRICARE Online provides more than 9.6 million TRICARE beneficiaries with access to available health care services and information. For more information, visit TRICARE Online at <http://www.tricareonline.com>.

### **REALifelines: Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor**

The REALifelines: Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor provides veterans, transitioning Servicemembers and their family members, with the resources they need to successfully transition to a rewarding career. Developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DoL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), the REALifelines: Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor provides valuable information and access to contact information for one-on-one employment assistance and online resources to assist transitioning Servicemembers and veterans in their reintegration into the civilian workforce. For more information on this program, please go to: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/realifelines.htm>

## **New Options for Military Homeowners**

The Federal Housing Finance Agency recently announced changes to its short-sale policies that should make it easier for military homeowners with Fannie Mae- or Freddie Mac-backed mortgage loans to honor their financial commitments when they are required to move as part of their duty. Under the new policy, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will not pursue deficiency judgments, cash contributions or promissory notes from members of the military with a change in duty station for any property purchased on or before June 30. Servicemembers can check Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac websites to see if their loans are held by these government-sponsored enterprises or they can call hotlines for military homeowners at 1-877-MIL-4566 or 1-800-FREDDIE.

## **VA Loan Eligibility Explained**

In order to obtain a VA home loan, you must first fill out VA Form 26-1880, the request for your Certificate of Eligibility. This certificate is issued only through the Veterans Administration, and is the first step towards applying for your loan. Veterans, active duty, guard or reserve, and military spouses potentially qualify for this certificate. Keep in mind that the Certificate of Eligibility, while necessary, only allows an eligible individual to apply for a home loan; it does not guarantee a loan approval. Get more information by going to: <http://mnstr.me/KtqKNO>

## **United Through Reading**

For almost a decade, United Through Reading has been helping military parents maintain a connection to their children during deployment. Through the program, deployed Servicemembers are recorded reading stories to their children. Each Servicemember is recorded on a DVD reading a book to their child, and the program then sends the book and DVD to that child. The service is free. For more information, contact your local USO office or visit the USO's United Through Reading webpage at: <http://www.uso.org/united-through-reading.aspx>



## **M - HEROES ON HORSEBACK**

Majestic Hills Ranch has been providing therapeutic horseback riding to children and young adults for fifteen years.

In 2010 we received a donation that allowed us to set up a second outdoor riding arena. Our Board of Directors had been discussing giving back to our brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for us and our Country and the timing was perfect. We started "Heroes on Horseback", our therapeutic horseback riding program for injured veterans, active and inactive.

We presented our services to the VA Medical Center in the later part of 2010 and are currently providing services to these inpatients, in particular the Poly Trauma unit. The majority are suffering from PTSD or Brain Trauma injury but others have other disability challenges. We have also partnered with the Minnesota Veteran's Homes/Minneapolis and Hastings and have referral outpatients as well. Last year we were fortunate to receive monies that allowed us to have a customized lift and carriage built. This allows us to expand our service to those that are wheelchair bound as the lift will bring the veteran to the height of the horses back. The carriage allows veterans to drive that are not capable of riding a horse but still get them out in 105 acres of beautiful scenic and peaceful surroundings, helping build self-esteem and we have found they open up and start socializing which is so very important.

We provide these services free of charge to our veterans and want to get the word out to others that could use the "Heroes on Horseback" program. Our website has the forms they need to complete along with physicians signature.

We are a 501 © 3 non-profit organization. Our goal is to be added to the Programs that assist Soldiers and their families in Minneota

Larry R. Johnson, Majestic Hills Ranch, Board Vice President  
952-703-3719 or 612-669-8846

For more information visit [www.majestichillsranch.or](http://www.majestichillsranch.or)

**M- Minnesota Veterans Career Fair - July 11, 2012**



# Minnesota Veterans Career Fair 2012

★ **Wednesday, July 11th, 2012**  
**11 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

★ Workshop for job seekers offered  
from 9 – 10 a.m.  
– Workshop allows early admission to the Career Fair at 10 a.m.

★ Earle Brown Heritage Center  
6155 Earle Brown Drive  
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

★ Map and Directions:  
[www.earlebrown.com](http://www.earlebrown.com)

The Minnesota Veterans Employment Service invites all job-seeking veterans to this *"Veteran Friendly"* employer event. Job opportunities and educational information will be available. Service providers with expert knowledge of Veterans services will also be present. **Hope to see you there!**

For more information: [www.PositivelyMinnesota.com/Veterans](http://www.PositivelyMinnesota.com/Veterans)

This event is a collaboration between:



VCF\_Job Seeker

**VA Extends Verification Term for Veteran Entrepreneurs**  
*Two Years to Help Efficiency, Accountability*

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs is doubling the amount of time before the owners of service-disabled, Veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB) and Veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) must re-verify with VA that they are, in fact, owned and operated by qualified Veterans and other legal requirements.

“The community of Veteran-owned businesses and businesses owned by service-disabled Veterans is a vital partner with VA and the federal government,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “To ensure we have improved our verification policies and processes, I have directed that VA simplify the verification process immediately and move from an annual to a biennial re-verification – every two years.”

The interim final rule, which took effect June 27, will benefit thousands of small businesses by reducing the uncertainty and administrative burden associated with a yearly verification cycle. Public comments on this interim final rule may be submitted within the next 60 days.

By increasing the verification period to two years, SDVOSBs and VOSBs will be able to plan and operate their companies more efficiently and effectively instead of working within the current 12-month business cycle. Under this interim final rule, businesses at the end of their two-year verification period would be required to be reverified through VA’s Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE).

In 2011, VA awarded \$3.2 billion in contracts to VOSBs and SDVOSBs. To participate in VA’s Veterans First program, a Veteran-owned and controlled small business must be verified as an eligible firm by initiating and completing the application process with CVE through the web-based Vendor Information Pages database. Information about the process for verification can be found on the VA website at <http://www.vetbiz.gov/>.

Businesses removed from the VIP database that were verified from June 2010 to December 2010 have with their remaining months added to coincide with their one year extension via the interim change.

These designated businesses will be required to reverify within 120 days of their expiration date. All future applications for reverification will be required to submit a complete set of new documentation with each application.

## **Joint VA/DOL Program Launches to Retrain 99,000 Unemployed Veterans**

*Online Site Opens May 15 for Veterans to Apply for Education Benefits*

WASHINGTON – Starting May 15, unemployed Veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 can now apply for new benefits to cover education costs for up to one year through a joint Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Labor (DOL) program that focuses on retraining 99,000 Veterans for high-demand jobs.

“This important tool will help those who served our country receive the education and training they need to find meaningful employment in a high-demand field,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “Veterans are disciplined, hardworking, goal-oriented team members who can play a vital role in helping businesses and the economy grow.”

“Our veterans have made this nation stronger through their service, and they deserve our continued support,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “This new program will help unemployed veterans expand their skills and compete for good jobs,” she added.

As part of a provision of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, the Veteran Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) allows qualifying Veterans to receive up to 12 months of assistance equal to the full-time Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty rate, currently \$1,473 per month.



Veterans can apply on a first-come, first-serve basis for VRAP beginning on May 15, 2012, for programs that begin on or after July 1, 2012. Assistance under this benefit program ends on March 31, 2014.

To complete an application, a Veteran will need to know his or her direct deposit information (bank routing number and account number), the name and location of his or her school, the program the Veteran wishes to pursue, and the applicable high-demand occupation.

To qualify Veterans must:

- Be 35-60 years old, unemployed on the day of application, and not dishonorably discharged;
- Start education or training after July 1, 2012, in a VA-approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school leading to an associate degree, non-college degree or a certificate for a high-demand occupation as defined by the DOL;
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g. Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment);
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job training program within the last 180 days;
- Not receive VA compensation at the 100% rate due to individual unemployability (IU).

Upon completion, the Labor Department will engage with participants within 30 days after their training to help them find good jobs that utilize their newly learned skills.

“We are working diligently with our partners around the country to ensure our Veterans have access to all the benefits and services to which they are entitled—especially when it comes to those unemployed,” added Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey.

“This is a true example of interagency collaboration and we are committed to the full and speedy implementation of this program to ensure the success of our veterans in the civilian labor market,” said Ismael “Junior” Ortiz, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Veterans Employment Training Service.

For more information on VOW, VRAP, high demand occupations, and how to apply, Veterans may go to the website at [www.benefits.va.gov/VOW](http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOW), or call VA’s Call Centers toll free at 1-800-827-1000, Veterans may also access the VRAP application online at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> through eBenefits, a joint project between the Department of Defense and VA.

Veterans are also encouraged to visit the nearly 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers across the nation for assistance from staff, Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVERS), and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists. To find the center near you visit [www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org).

**For more information about the Department of Labor’s Veterans programs, go to**

**<http://www.dol.gov/vets/>**

### **Army Reserve Command creates new Retirement Services Office**

As Army Reserve Soldiers near the end of their time in uniform, many start thinking about the next phase of their lives. To assist with this transition, the U.S. Army Reserve Command has established the Retirement Services Office to help Soldiers and their families ensure they receive the benefits they have earned. Each Regional Support Command has a dedicated Retirement Service Office (RSO) to serve those within each geographic area. Within those RSOs are trained retirement service officers to assist soldiers with their retirement benefits as they provide crucial retirement counseling and pre-retirement services to soldiers and families to aid them in making timely and informed decisions regarding their entitlements and benefits. To read the full article, please see: <http://bit.ly/MzE6Q6>

### **M - Boot Camp 2012 Benefitting MACV and MMFF**

### **A Fitness Fundraiser Benefitting Military Families**

Boot Camp, a fitness fundraiser benefitting military families, is a family-friendly fitness challenge inspired by Kraus-Anderson's wellness committee to support military service men, women and their families.

Following eight successful years producing Walk for Hope, which raised over \$250,000 for the American Cancer Society, the Engelsma Family Foundation (EFF) has shifted its focus to veterans, active military and their families. This year, profits from the event will be split between two charity partners, MACV and MMFF. All donations to EFF Boot Camp are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Rally your troops and get set for a stimulating morning of heart-pounding activity at the Northern Star Council, Boy Scouts of America Base Camp!

You'll be introduced to climbing on the indoor rock face, a replica of Taylors Falls. Be a superhero from high up the indoor and outdoor ropes courses, testing your courage, while securely harnessed; and you can introduce your family and friends to archery on the indoor range. The little ones will be amused and entertained with child-friendly activities.

The event location is the 6,000 s.f. Boy Scouts of America Base Camp facility at Fort Snelling. Here you'll find fitness challenges for all ages and levels, including:

Climbing wall (ages 5+)

Archery (ages 5+)

Ropes course (ages 12+)

Face painting, balloon animals and kiddie games

Plus

Snack pack compliments of WaterPark of America

Souvenir dog tags

Representatives from MACV, MMFF and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

Questions? Contact [bootcamp@krausanderson.com](mailto:bootcamp@krausanderson.com)

### **Social Security for Wounded Warriors**

Social Security's Wounded Warriors Initiative is for Servicemembers who become disabled while on active duty on or after Oct. 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs. Depending on the situation, some family members of military personnel, including dependent children and, in some cases, spouses, may be able to receive benefits.

For more information, read the publication 'Military Service and Social Security' at:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10017.html> or visit the Social Security Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors webpage at [www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors)

### **Marriage Counseling Seminars Free of Charge to Wounded Warriors**

The toll of invisible war wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is felt not only by Servicemembers, but by the spouses and other family members working hard to support and understand them. Many Servicemembers struggling with PTSD feel they cannot share with their spouse and marriages can suffer under the stress of deployment, combat exposure and the struggles that often follow. However, open and honest communication is key to repairing and strengthening family relationships. The USO has partnered with the Stronger Families organization to present a series of marriage counseling seminars free of charge to wounded warriors and their families. Called the Oxygen For Your Relationships Program, the seminar teaches couples how to improve their communication, better understand each other's needs, resolve conflict, rekindle romance and find renewed hope. In addition to the one-time, in-person training, the program provides ongoing training and resources through community support groups and an online support network. For more information on these seminars, please click:

<http://bit.ly/LbFtPp>

### **Operation Warfighter**

Operation Warfighter is a Federal (OWF) internship program for wounded, ill, and injured Servicemembers. The main objective of OWF is to place Servicemembers in supportive work settings that positively impact their recuperation. The program represents a great opportunity for transitioning Servicemembers to augment their employment readiness by building their resumes, exploring employment interests, developing job skills, benefiting from on-the-job training opportunities, gaining valuable Federal government work experience and building self-confidence. For more information including several of the Federal agencies that participate in this program, visit the Military Homefront webpage at: <http://1.usa.gov/LAUhtF> or the Operation Warfighter Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/OperationWarfighter>

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership**

The Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) is addressing the career challenges husbands and wives of active-duty military members face. Spouses of any active-duty member can now use the program through the MSEP Career Portal on the Military OneSource Website at <https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil/>. According to MSEP reports, approximately one out of four military spouses is unemployed. Since MSEP's launch on June 29, 2011, more than 394,977 jobs have been posted by MSEP partners on the Web portal, and 20,529 military spouses have been hired by the program's partners.

### **Thank a Hero**

Thanks-A-Bunch™ and Military.com have come together to offer you a unique opportunity to say "thanks" to our troops, our veterans and their families (American Heroes) by providing them with a \$50 Thanks-A-Bunch gift card that you can purchase for just \$10 (tax deductible) to help pay for a nice meal out with family and friends. We've all experienced a time when we thought about buying a meal for an America's Hero or just walking up to a Soldier or veteran and saying thanks. Thanks-A-Bunch™ created a program that makes saying "thanks" to our America's Heroes easy to do and helps make the lives of our military families just a bit easier. For details about thanking our Soldiers, please see: [http://www.thanksabunch.org/milcom/?oid=1010\\_6](http://www.thanksabunch.org/milcom/?oid=1010_6)

### **Reservists to Respond to Homeland Disasters**

A [new provision put forth in this year's Defense Department Authorization Act](#) allows for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps Reserves to be called to duty in response to natural disasters or emergencies in the homeland, as well as to be mobilized for extended periods to support theater security missions around the world. The new legislation utilizes federal Title 10 Reservists to operate with state Title 32 Reservists for up to 120 days when the president declares an emergency and a state governor requests assistance.

### **TRICARE Announces New Contractor**

As of May 1, 2012, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Inc. (MetLife) is the new TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) contractor. Beneficiaries purchasing TDP will see expanded dental benefits beginning May 1 with lower monthly premium rates than last year. More details about premiums costs can be found on the MetLife TDP website at [mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare](http://mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare). TDP information is available by calling 1-855-638-8371 in the U.S., 1-855-638-8372 outside the United States or online through the MetLife TDP website at [mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare](http://mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare). The website has more information about costs, coverage details and finding a provider. For more information about TRICARE's dental programs, visit the TRICARE Dental webpage at <http://www.tricare.mil/dental>.

### **Mobile Application Helps Prevent Post-deployment 'Blues'**

A new mobile application developed by mental health experts combines behavioral therapy with satellite navigation technology to offer returning Servicemembers options for adjusting to the slower pace of life at home. Developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, the "Positive Activity Jackpot," app provides service personnel with entertainment options aimed at overcoming a possible difficult transition from the high tempo of deployment. Servicemembers who are used to a more-structured daily schedule may have difficulty adjusting to life at home which can lead to difficulties with relationships, depression and other problems. For additional details about this app, please go to:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116305>

### **Servicemembers, Families, Get Free Pass to National Parks**

Servicemembers and their families will be able to enter all of America's national parks free of charge for a year under an initiative, the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Annual Pass. Typically, this costs \$80, but has become available to Servicemembers and their dependents on Armed Forces Day, 19 May. The passes allow the holder and passengers in a single private vehicle access to some 2,000 sites that charge per vehicle. At sites where entrance fees are charged per person, it covers the pass owner and three adults age 16 and older. Family members also will be able to obtain their own pass, even if the Servicemember is deployed or if they are traveling separately. The free pass will be made available for activated members of the National Guard and reserves, but not for military veterans or retirees. The pass will be accepted at National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees. To read more about this offer, please go to:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116342>

### **Program Offers Paid Training for Unemployed Veterans**

Unemployed veterans ages 35 to 60 can apply for up to 12 months of paid training through a new program sponsored by the Departments of Labor (DoL) and Veterans Affairs (VA). The program was created to provide assistance to unemployed veterans who are not covered by any of our education programs and need training or an education boost for today's high-demand occupations. The program provides 12 months of training assistance equal to the monthly full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program, which currently pays \$1,473 per month. Participants must be enrolled in a community college or technical school program approved for VA benefits. The program must lead to an associate degree, non-college degree or certificate. Eligible veterans may call 800-827-1000 to learn more about the program, or visit:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116347>

### **Military Education Benefits User's Guide**

Military service offers several education benefits, but trying to use them can be confusing. This compact users guide from Military.com will help you use your education benefits wisely and get the most benefits for your money. It includes information on Tuition Assistance, TA Top Up, Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Federal Student Aid & Scholarships. To view the user's guide online, please click: <http://mnstr.me/HOblw9>. It is also important to compare schools to make sure it meets your specific requirements. To search for schools with VA-Approved Programs, please see <http://edu.military.com/gibill/?ESRC=mrvr.nl>

### **New Wounded Warriors App**

A new smartphone app has been released for iPhone and Android devices that provides wounded warriors with a comprehensive mobile resource guide. Based on "The Wounded, Ill and Injured Compensation and Benefits Handbook" that was released November by the Department of Defense, the free app gives wounded and ill

Servicemembers and their families access to information they may need during recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration, and answers many of the questions that Servicemembers may have. The app also lists toll free numbers for TRICARE regional contractors, behavioral healthcare providers and other TRICARE programs (dental, pharmacy, etc.). The app can be downloaded for free on the Android Market and iTunes Store.

### **TRICARE Introduces New Benefits**

TRICARE introduced several new programs in 2009. The TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) provides short-term professional counseling assistance. For information about TRIAP and other behavioral health resources, visit the TRICARE Mental Health Resources Center. TRICARE's new Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) benefits for eligible family members who are diagnosed with extraordinary physical or psychological conditions. For more information on TRICARE's new dental program and pharmacy benefits, visit the TRICARE Active Duty Dental Program website at: <http://www.addp-ucci.com> and the TRICARE Pharmacy Program webpage at [www.TRICARE.mil/pharmacy](http://www.TRICARE.mil/pharmacy). For further information, please go to: <http://www.military.com>.

### **Suicide Prevention Resources for Military Families**

No warrior or military family is alone. If you are concerned that a service member or veteran in your family is considering harming or killing him/herself, free resources are immediately available to aid your family in its time of crisis. To get help for someone immediately, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-TALK and press 1. You can also use the information below to educate yourself about how to tell if a loved one may be experiencing thoughts of suicide, and what you can do to help him or her find the strength to reach out for help.

<http://www.realwarriors.net/family/support/preventsuicide.php>

### **VA Launches 'Project REACH' Contest to Help Homeless**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a new contest recently to help the people who help the homeless. It challenges the developer community to create easy, mobile access to resources that the homeless need, when they need it and where they can get it. Project REACH (Real-time Electronic Access for Caregivers and the Homeless) was announced in collaboration with the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and the Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping the lives of people facing economic challenges. The ultimate goal of the contest is to create a national platform that enables health clinics, food kitchens, housing services and shelters to update availability of key services automatically on the Internet. The winning app will collect, map, and electronically distribute that information for communities across the nation. For more information on this contest, please go to:

<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2278>

### **M - Fellow Military Retiree:**

The planning for this year's Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD) is well under way for **22 SEP 2012**. This year's event will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

Please note that mailings this year are limited so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, etc. This is why it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

This year's registration form along with more information can be found on our website:

<http://metrojrad.blogspot.com/>

Early Bird Registration: A drawing will be held for: one night stay at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino for two; buffet for two; and concert tickets of your choice for two. Early Bird Registration must be received at Navy RAO by August 17, 2012.

Regular Registration is required by Sep 7th, 2012 JRAD 2012 Com

### **Get Screened and Stand Up to Cancer**



Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in the United States, but fortunately, many common types of cancer are treatable if detected early. To ensure early detection, TRICARE covers a variety of cancer screenings at no cost to you. Cancer screenings are among the most effective preventive measures available to protect your health. As you age, cancer screenings should become part of your regular medical routine. There are many effective screening tests for different types of cancers. TRICARE covers cancer screenings for breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer and others. Since cancer screenings are preventive care, there is no cost to you for the service, although you may have to pay office visit cost shares if you visit your doctor. Learn more about TRICARE coverage of preventive services like cancer screenings at <http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/overview/HealthyLiving/PreventiveCare>.

### **Military Families Can Take Steps to Prevent Lost or Stolen Pets**

A missing pet can be a devastating experience for family members and can result in a dangerous situation for the animal. However, military families can take steps to keep their beloved pets safe and secure. Learn more: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=67659>

### **Internships for Wounded Warriors**

Are you a wounded, ill or injured Servicemember looking to increase your career readiness and use your time productively while you recover? Consider participating in an Operation Warfighter internship! To get an idea of how an internship could help you during your recovery and rehabilitation, read the story of one of the interns on the DoD Warrior Care Blog. For more information about Federal internship opportunities, send an e-mail to [warriorcare@osd.mil](mailto:warriorcare@osd.mil). To read this article in its entirety, please go to: <http://www.military.com/military-report/internships-for-wounded-warriors>.

### **Transition Services Now Mandatory for Soldiers**

Soldiers now must participate in transition services before they leave active duty. An execution order requiring them to make use of the services is in force throughout the Army. The order applies to all Soldiers who are leaving active duty, whether they are Regular Army members who are separating or retiring or reservists demobilizing after six months or more on active duty. The order, which implements a directive issued last year by Army Secretary John McHugh further requires that transition processing begin at least 12 months before a Soldier leaves active duty and that the Soldier's commander oversee the process. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/04/army-transition-services-now-mandatory-040312w/>

### **TRICARE Dental Under New Management**

MetLife will take over managing the TRICARE Dental Program and begin providing dental coverage for more than 2 million active duty family members, selected and individual Ready Reservists and their families on May 1, 2012. This change does not affect TRICARE's Retiree Dental plan (TDP). All TDP enrollees will receive welcome packages and new enrollment cards. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.military.com/military-report/tricare-dental-under-new-management>

### **Deal of the Week: Military Discounts**

Visit the Military.com Discounts Channel to find hundreds of discounts for Servicemembers, reservists, guard, veterans, retirees and their families - Travel, clothing trucks, electronics, fitness and more. For more information, please go to: <http://www.military.com/military-report/deal-of-week-military-discounts-040212>

## **Military Kids Can Apply for Free Summer Camps**

With the barometer rising and the school year drawing to a close, parents across the nation are starting to think about summertime plans. Military families can get a head start on their planning today by applying for the National Military Family Association's (NMFA) Operation Purple Summer Camp program. The nonprofit organization launched this free program nine years ago to support military children, ages 7 to 17, dealing with the stress of war. The weeklong camps are open to military children of all ranks and services, both active and reserve. Officials will give priority to children who meet the association's deployment criteria and have never attended an Operation Purple camp. Families should submit their application by midnight EDT on 19 April. For more information or to submit an online application, visit the NMFA website at: <http://bit.ly/GEAfwV>

### **M - After Deployment: Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT)**

The University of Minnesota is supporting veterans and their families with parenting research and resources through the deployment cycle. All military families are welcome to access parenting resources found on the web site: <http://z.umn.edu/militaryparent>. After Deployment: Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT) is a University of Minnesota study conducted with the support of the Minnesota Department of Veteran's Affairs, the Minnesota National Guard, and Reserve units. The goal of ADAPT is to evaluate new parenting tools to support and strengthen military families' resilience during deployment and reintegration. If you are a parent of a 4 to 12-year old child, you may be eligible for the ADAPT study. Your participation will help other military families through the deployment cycle. Participants receive up to \$595 and valuable parenting resources. To learn if you or someone you know may qualify, go to: <http://z.umn.edu/militaryparent>. You are welcome to check out our resources, sign-up for an e-newsletter with tips for parenting through deployment and reintegration, and learn more about the ADAPT study. If you have any questions, please contact the ADAPT team at the University of Minnesota. Let us know how we might serve you!

The ADAPT Team  
College of Education and Human Development,  
University of Minnesota  
Web site: <http://z.umn.edu/militaryparent>  
Email: [adapt@umn.edu](mailto:adapt@umn.edu)  
Parent phone line: [612-624-4830](tel:612-624-4830)

## **Suicide Prevention Program**

Soldiers and families in need of crisis assistance can contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Trained consultants are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and can be contacted by dialing 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and pressing "1" for Military members and Veterans or by visiting their website at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). The Army's comprehensive list of Suicide Prevention Program information is located at <http://www.preventsuicide.army.mil> Army leaders can access current health promotion guidance in newly revised Army Regulation 600-63 (Health Promotion) at: [http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/r600\\_63.pdf](http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/r600_63.pdf) and Army Pamphlet 600-24 (Health Promotion, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention) at [http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/p600\\_24.pdf](http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/p600_24.pdf).

Suicide prevention training resources for Soldiers, leaders, Department of the Army Civilians, and Family members can be accessed at: [http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/training\\_sub.asp?sub\\_cat=20](http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/training_sub.asp?sub_cat=20) (requires Army Knowledge Online access to download materials).

Information about Military OneSource is located at [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) or by dialing the toll-free number 1-800-342-9647 for those residing in the continental U.S. Overseas personnel should refer to the Military OneSource Web site for dialing instructions for their specific location.

Information about the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program is located at <http://www.army.mil/csf/>.



The Defense Center for Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) Outreach Center can be contacted at 1-866-966-1020, via electronic mail at [Resources@DCoEOutreach.org](mailto:Resources@DCoEOutreach.org) and at [www.dcoe.health.mil](http://www.dcoe.health.mil).

The website for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is <http://www.afsp.org/>, and the Suicide Prevention Resource Council site is found at <http://www.sprc.org/index.asp>.

Point of contact for this notification is CPT Laura Keenan, 703-697-5863.

FURNISHED BY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

### **Mission Continues Fellowship Program**

The Mission Continues is the only national nonprofit organization challenging post-9/11 veterans to rebuild a sense of purpose through community service.

What is a Mission Continues fellowship?

A fellowship is an opportunity for a Fellow to utilize his/her military skills and leadership in a civilian setting. Fellowships are 26 weeks in length, during which the Fellow volunteers at a local charitable organization, utilizing their leadership skills to build stronger communities.

Fellowship expectations:

- Work 20 hours per week for 26 weeks at a local nonprofit organization
- Monthly written assignments, including professional development tasks such as goalsetting, skills assesment, resume building, etc.)
- Complete a capstone service project

Benefits of a Mission Continues Fellowship:

- Challenge yourself through service here at home
- Develop your professional skills
- Train with local non-profit organizations
- Translate your military-based skills to civilian life
- Develop goal-setting skills
- Network with fellow veterans and community leaders
- Utilize your leadership skills in your community
- Build your sense of purpose
- Build a stronger community

[www.missioncontinues.org](http://www.missioncontinues.org)

[www.facebook.com/themissioncontinues](http://www.facebook.com/themissioncontinues)

twitter: [@missioncontinue](https://twitter.com/missioncontinue)

For more information

or to apply:

July 30, 2012

**Class: 2012 Delta**

October 19-21, 2012

October 22, 2012

April 19, 2013

June 1, 2012

**Class: 2012 Charlie**

August 3-5, 2012

August 6, 2012

February 2, 2013

March 1, 2012

**Class: 2012 Bravo**

April 20 - 22, 2012

April 23, 2012

October 19, 2012

November 11, 2011

**Class: 2012 Alpha**

January 6 - 8, 2012

January 9, 2012

July 6, 2012

**Application Deadline**

**Orientation**

**Fellowship Start Date**

**Fellowship End Date**

\* \*

Who is eligible for a fellowship?

Potential Fellows must meet these requirements:

- Post 9/11 service
- No longer on Active/Guard/Reserve status (IRR/ING status is acceptable) and having attained an honorable discharge
- Minimum of 24 months of time in service, unless serious injury was sustained preventing further service
- Clean criminal record check (individual cases may be discussed on a case-by-case basis)

Fellowship Organization Choice:

Our goal is to connect you with a nonprofit organization in which you can make a difference in your community utilizing your leadership skills. Previous Fellows have served with:

- Habitat for Humanity
- American Red Cross
- The Humane Society
- Children's Hospital
- Make A Wish Foundation
- Many more!
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving

phone: 314-588-8805

email: [fellowships@missioncontinues.org](mailto:fellowships@missioncontinues.org)

use your smart phone to learn more

## **VA Launches Personalized Health Benefits Handbook**

Veterans enrolled in the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have begun to receive personalized booklets that explain their health care benefits and contain other useful information. The new booklet, called a Health Benefits Handbook, will provide a personalized listing of health benefits based on each Veteran's specific eligibility. The handbook will also have contact information for their local VA medical facilities, appointment scheduling information, guidelines for communicating with their clinical team and information about copays, if applicable. Distribution of the handbooks began in February, with all 8.5 million Veterans enrolled in VA's health care system scheduled to receive their handbooks by 2013. Veterans will receive updates to their handbook to reflect changes to their benefits or eligibility. For more information about the Health Benefits Handbook, visit <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhbh> or call VA's toll-free number at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

## **H&R Block at Home® Free Tax Filing Service**

Military OneSource is once again offering a free, electronic tax filing service. If you are eligible under the Military OneSource program, you can complete, save, and file your 2011 federal and up to three state returns online free with the H&R Block At Home® tool.

To access this free version of H&R Block At Home®, you must start your return from the [Military OneSource H&R Block At Home®](#) link. Once you click the link you will be required to log in to Military OneSource. From the login page you will be directed to a site containing additional information on tax preparation, including the link to the Military OneSource free H&R Block At Home® service.

If you have questions about this tax service or about preparing your own tax returns, please call 1-800-342-9647 and ask to speak with a Military OneSource tax consultant. Trained tax consultants are available 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., EST. For information about deductions, exemptions, and filing deadlines visit the [Military OneSource Tax Program page](#).

**Special alert: H&R Block does not send urgent or time sensitive text messages or emails asking clients to provide, update or confirm sensitive data. These text messages are scams and are not information requests from H&R Block. More information is available on the [Military OneSource Tax Program page](#).**

This information came from [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

## **Official Provides Tax Tips for Troops**

A Defense Department (DoD) tax official recently claimed that as Servicemembers begin preparing for the annual tax season, they may want to consider a new savings plan designed for young people. Servicemembers and their dependents who earn less income today than they expect to earn in the future, such as those in junior ranks who look forward to getting promoted to higher grades, should consider investing in the Thrift Savings Plan's (TSP's) new Roth option. The traditional TSP defers taxes on earned income until the money is withdrawn, but the Roth option allows a member to contribute after-tax dollars that grow tax free and are not taxed upon withdrawal, and both plans allow a maximum annual contribution of \$17,000. This allows military members to have a tax advantage by having a chunk of their regular pay as tax-exempt income. To learn more about tax tips, click: <http://1.usa.gov/y7lpaH> as well as consulting Military OneSource who offers free tax-related phone consultations seven days-a-week, from 0700 to 2300 at 1-800-730-3802.

## **Scholarship information to your Servicemembers:**

The Daniel Drevnick Scholarship has been established to assist veterans in the transition from military service to civilian law enforcement. The fund is awarded twice yearly to an outstanding veteran or family member of a veteran. The memorial fund promotes the values of freedom, opportunity, responsibility, compassion and morality. because this is what Daniel stood for. For additional information please see: <http://www.heroathome.org/>

## **TRICARE Young Adult Prime**

**Military families have a new TRICARE Prime option for young adults without healthcare coverage.**

TRICARE Young Adult Prime gives eligible family members TRICARE Prime medical and pharmacy coverage with low out-of-pocket costs for a \$201 monthly premium. Military family members who are not married, who have "aged out" of other TRICARE eligibility (up to age 26) and who have a TRICARE-eligible sponsor are eligible to purchase TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) coverage. TYA enrollees can choose either TYA Standard or

TYA Prime coverage, based on eligibility as the choice will determine your monthly premium, out-of-pockets costs and how you access care. Each TYA program allows access to the TRICARE pharmacy benefit. For complete information, along with the application form, please click: <http://1.usa.gov/AtW8zV> or click: <http://1.usa.gov/w4Hiyq> for more information.

### **M - Support Our Troop Day! At Buck Hill March 4, 2012**

This is a unique day for troops and their immediate families, including children. Receive a free lift ticket for skiing and snowboarding with military identification. A limited number of snow tubing tickets are also available.

<http://www.buckhill.com/winter/supportourtroops.html>

### **Changes Coming for TRICARE Dental**

On 1 May 2012, TRICARE will change TRICARE Dental Program coverage from United Concordia to MetLife. This means that over 2 million Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve members, family members, and survivors may soon see some significant changes to their dental coverage. According to TRICARE, beneficiaries can expect to see the enhanced dental coverage at a lower premium share under the new contract. The change to MetLife is for family members, members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve, and survivors only. The Active Duty Dental Program will continue to be administered by United Concordia. The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program coverage will remain under Delta Dental. To understand more about this change, please see: <http://bit.ly/x5fGz8>

### **VA Introduces Text Messaging in Efforts to Prevent Suicide**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is expanding its efforts to prevent suicide through several new initiatives that increase the availability of services for Veterans, Servicemembers and their families. Now, in addition to the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and online chat, located at: <http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net>, Veterans and Servicemembers in crisis, and their friends and families, may text free of charge to 83-8255 to receive confidential, personal and immediate support. The text service is available, like the Veterans Crisis Line and online chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year and connects a user with a specially trained VA professional. To read further on this effort, please see: <http://1.usa.gov/xB0cd7>

### **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has an online “assistant” that can help you find out if you may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC gives a tax break to individuals who earn a low to moderate income. After answering a few questions, the 2011 EITC Assistant will help you find out if you are eligible, if your children qualify and give you an estimate of your tax credit. To visit the EITC Assistant, please go to: <http://1.usa.gov/qaJkp>

### **College Credit for Military Experience**

The American Council on Education (ACE) was created in 1942 to recognize the educational value of military training and experience. Through ACE, you can take academic credit for most of the training you have received, including Basic Training. The first step to claiming the credits you have earned is to request a transcript from your military service. Each service will provide unofficial personal copies and send schools an official copy of your transcript at no charge. In most cases, ACE recommended credits will be used to fulfill your free-elective requirements, but each college determines the number of credits they will accept, and how they will be applied toward your degree. In fact, some schools may even choose not to grant any credit for military experience. That is why it is critical to shop around for a school that meets your specific requirements. To get more information on ACE and search for schools with VA approved programs, please see: <http://mnstr.me/wWGmAs> or <http://edu.military.com/gibill/?ESRC=mrvr.nl>

## New CPR Technique-SJB

This procedure may save a life. Have a look at the video.

Please watch video and send to everyone in your address book.

Learn how to save a life!!!

This is the new CPR technique is much simpler.

Very well worth watching. You may be able to save a life...

Interesting to note that certifications not required.

If you haven't seen this, you should.

If you have seen it, it won't hurt to see it again.

This is a new CPR technique is much simpler.

Please watch and forward to your friends and family.

You never know, a life may be saved utilizing this new procedure.

<http://tinyurl.com/2fx8r59>

## Trips for Veterans



*Explore the splendor of Yellowstone National Park with other veterans*

Americans enjoy and celebrate freedom in many different ways. At Wilderness Inquiry we treasure the freedom of exploring America's wild places and never forget those who defend and protect these beautiful lands. We are honored to serve our nation's veterans through special trips and events designed to help veterans, of all abilities and backgrounds, enjoy the great outdoor freedoms they've helped provide for us all.

In partnership with the [Sierra Club's Military Families Outdoors](#) program, WI will provide greatly discounted outdoor adventure training trips for veterans during 2012. The retail fee for these trips ranges from \$795-895, but the cost to the veteran will be only \$100. These trips are designed to build on veterans' leadership experience and promote lifelong outdoor recreation skills.

---

**Trips for Veterans**

**2012 Dates    Fee**

<a href="#">Boundary Waters Canoe Area 7-day - Veteran Training Course more»</a>	6/10-6/16/12	\$100	_____
<a href="#">Everglades' 10,000 Islands - Veteran Training Course more»</a>	3/5-3/10/12	\$100	<a href="#">Register Now</a>
<a href="#">Yellowstone Lake Backcountry Canoe - Veteran Training Course more»</a>	7/27-8/1/12	\$100	<a href="#">Register Now</a>
<a href="#">Boundary Waters Canoe Area 7-Day - Veteran Training Course more»</a>	8/27-9/2/12	\$100	<a href="#">Register Now</a>

Wilderness Inquiry has a long history of serving veterans and their families.

In the 1990s, WI led a major support program for the Agent Orange Class Assistance Program. This past year WI partnered with the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Foundation and Craig Hospital to serve veterans and their families on a five-day kayaking adventure. WI also provides outdoor experiences through sponsored veteran exchange trips. Every year we serve about 800 veterans through our trips and programs.

These many years of serving our veterans have only proven and strengthened our mission to provide the kind of enjoyment, learning, and healing that shared outdoor adventure can provide. One veteran who completed an Everglades trip believes the outdoors not only builds healing, but also provides team-building and personal growth:

"Being a Vietnam veteran, I have always avoided prolonged exposure to rain and getting wet. Being with others of my same bent helped me overcome this issue. I was dry, snug, and comfortable despite the environment. Sometimes, only nature can provide the right challenges at the right time."

WI is committed to developing programs that focus on these kinds of opportunities for veterans as well as making it financially possible for all veterans to enjoy our trips.

[Share the Love: Send Valentines to Veterans](#)



Army & Air Force Exchange Service shoppers can show their appreciation to military servicemembers who came before them by sending free valentines through their local Exchange now through Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>.

Now in its second year, ["Valentines for Veterans"](#) is an annual Exchange campaign to send greetings to local Veterans Administration hospitals, Fisher House locations and military retirement facilities.

"Our shoppers include many veterans and their families who know what it means to serve, and understand how nice it is to be remembered," said Exchange Chief of Staff Col. Thomas Ockenfels. "'Valentines for Veterans' is an opportunity for our patrons to reach out to those who've already served and send their greetings."



To send free Valentine's Day cards, shoppers can simply stop by participating Exchange facilities through Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> and fill out cards provided, or bring their own cards to drop off. The Exchange will arrange for delivery to local veterans on or before Valentine's Day.

Former Air Force servicemember Ray Lamy, who currently is the Exchange HQs Military Outreach coordinator, said "The veterans we delivered to in 2011 really appreciated all the Valentines greetings. Everyone loves to be remembered."

Exchange shoppers can learn more by contacting their local Main Exchange and asking about "Valentines for Veterans." Supporters can visit [shopmyexchange.com](http://shopmyexchange.com)'s "[Exchange Stores](#)" link to find their closest Exchange location.

## **M - The Minnesota Reservist and Veteran Business Loan Program**

The Minnesota Reservist and Veteran Business Loan Program provides business loans to companies that are affected when certain employees are called to active military duty and to individual veterans who have returned from active duty and want to start their own business.

### **Business Loans**

These loans are for existing small businesses that have an essential employee called to active service in the military reserves for 180 days or longer, causing a substantial economic injury to the business due to the employee's absence.

### **Start Up Business Loans**

These loans are for recently service separated veterans seeking financial assistance to start their own small businesses.

### **Financing and Terms**

Both types of loans provide one-time, interest-free loans of \$5,000 to \$20,000. The loan terms are 54 months, with no repayment for the first 18 months and equal monthly payments over the remaining 36 months.

The financing comes from the program's revolving loan fund, which has a total of \$400,000 available. Applications are accepted and loans disbursed until all funds are committed.

[Minnesota Reservists & Veteran Business Loan Program Fact Sheet](#)

For More Information

Contact Jeff Nelson at 651-259-7523 or email [Jeff.M.Nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:Jeff.M.Nelson@state.mn.us)



## **National Resource Directory**

Connecting Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans, Their Families and Caregivers with Those Who Support Them Check out the National Resource Directory.

A new web-based resource for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families, families of the fallen and those who support them from the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs.

[www.nationalresourcedirectory.org](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org)

## **No cost Insurance for all VFW members in good standing**

All VFW members in good standing are insured under the VFW National Sponsored \$1,000 Personal Accident Protection Plan at no cost to the member.

Benefits are payable in the event of an accidental death or dismemberment.

This policy includes a \$1,500 travel rider in the event the member should pass away due to an accident while traveling as a paid passenger in a bus,

plane, train, etc. Benefits reduce at ages 70 and 75.

A copy of the duplicate certificate is located on our website at

<http://www.vfwinsurance.com/PAPP.htm>

<blocked[http://www.vfwinsurance.com/PAPP.htm?utm\\_source=MBR-EPUSH-JUNE2011&utm\\_medium=EMAIL&utm\\_campaign=MBR-EPUSH-JUNE2011](http://www.vfwinsurance.com/PAPP.htm?utm_source=MBR-EPUSH-JUNE2011&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=MBR-EPUSH-JUNE2011)> . All questions about this policy can be directed to the VFW Insurance Administrator at 1-800-626-0027, including how to file a claim.

Many posts mistakenly tell their members that they have a free life insurance policy through the VFW; however, this is not life insurance, rather it is an accidental death and dismemberment policy.

Information about all VFW National insurance plans can be found at

[www.vfwinsurance.com](http://www.vfwinsurance.com)

### **VA Announces Changes to Emergency Care Payment Policy**

January 12, 2012

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today a change in regulations regarding payments for emergency care provided to eligible Veterans in non-VA facilities.

“This provision helps ensure eligible Veterans continue to get the emergency care they need when VA facilities are not available,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The new regulation extends VA’s authority to pay for emergency care provided to eligible Veterans at non-VA facilities until the Veterans can be safely transferred to a VA medical facility.

More than 100,000 Veterans are estimated to be affected by the new rules, at a cost of about \$44 million annually.

VA operates 121 emergency departments across the country, which provide resuscitative therapy and stabilization in life-threatening situations. They operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. VA also has 46 urgent care units, which provide care for patients without scheduled appointments who need immediate medical or psychiatric attention.

For more information about emergency care in non-VA facilities, visit [www.nonvacare.va.gov](http://www.nonvacare.va.gov).

### **New Law Change Increases Insurance Coverage for Veterans**

Some Veterans covered under the Veterans Group Life Insurance program (VGLI) now have the current maximum coverage under the Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program. Under the Veterans’ Benefits Act of 2010, enacted on October 13, 2010, Veterans can increase their coverage by \$25,000 at each five-year anniversary date of their policy to the current legislated maximum SGLI coverage, presently, \$400,000. The VGLI program allows newly discharged Veterans to convert their SGLI coverage they had while in the service to a civilian program. Before enactment of this law, Veterans could not have more VGLI than the amount of SGLI they had at the time of separation from service. Now on their first five-year anniversary, these Veterans can elect to increase their coverage to \$275,000. On their next five-year anniversary, they can increase the coverage to \$300,000, and so forth. To learn more, please go to: <http://1.usa.gov/yYMhyn>

### **College Credit for Military Experience**

The American Council on Education (ACE) was created in 1942 to recognize the educational value of military training and experience. Through ACE, you can take academic credit for most of the training you have received, including Basic Training. The first step to claiming the credits you have earned is to request a transcript from your military service. Each service will provide unofficial personal copies and send schools an official copy of your

transcript at no charge. In most cases, ACE recommended credits will be used to fulfill your free-elective requirements, but each college determines the number of credits they will accept, and how they will be applied toward your degree. In fact, some schools may even choose not to grant any credit for military experience. That is why it is critical to shop around for a school that meets your specific requirements. For more information, please go to: <http://mnstr.me/wWGmAs>

## Hero Miles Program



With your support, we have provided more than 25,000 tickets to Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom hospitalized service members and their families, worth nearly \$40 million (average savings per ticket is currently about \$1,400).

- Downloads: [HERO MILES FACT SHEET](#) | [FAQS](#) | [PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT](#)

The nonprofit Fisher House Foundation administers the "Hero Miles" program for the Department of Defense in accordance with Public Law 108-375, Section 58, the FY 05 Defense Authorization Act. The program is comprised of individual airlines whose passengers donate their frequent flyer miles to assist service members and their families. Specifically, Fisher House Foundation provides free airline tickets to military men and women who are undergoing treatment at a military or VA medical center incident to their service in Iraq or Afghanistan, and their families.

### **There are two categories of eligible recipients:**

- Service men and women with an approved leave of five or more days may be given a free round trip airline ticket for a trip from the medical center to their home and return if they are not eligible for government funded airfare.
- Qualifying service men and women may be given free round trip airline tickets to enable their family or close friends to visit them while they are being treated at the medical center.

### **Assistance**

Fisher House is proud to partner with the following major airlines in support of our wounded and injured service men and women and

- [AIRTRAN AIRLINES](#)
- [ALASKA AIRLINES](#)
- [AMERICAN AIRLINES](#)
- [CONTINENTAL AIRLINES](#)
- [DELTA AIRLINES](#)
- [FRONTIER AIRLINES](#)
- [UNITED AIRLINES](#)
- [US AIRWAYS](#)

*Please note that our agreements with individual airlines only permit airline tickets for military (or DoD civilian employees) hospitalized as a result of their service in Iraq, Afghanistan, or contingency operations, and their families. These tickets can not be used for R&R travel or other travel not related to a medical condition.*

[HOW TO DONATE MILES](#)

*Thank you for your support! Fisher House Foundation, Inc., is a not-for-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Donations are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.*

### **Social Security for Wounded Warriors**

Did you know that Social Security provides expedited processing of disability claims for Wounded Warriors? An expedited process is used for military service members disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001. Benefits available through Social Security are different from those that the Department of Veterans Affairs offers, and require a separate application.

Wounded Warriors can apply for Social Security disability benefits online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability) by calling the toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213; or by visiting a local field office.

To learn more about this initiative and the benefits available to military service members, visit our Wounded Warriors website at: [www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors) The website offers an array of information including the Webinar – Social Security for Wounded Warriors, and Social Security Publication No. 05-10030 –Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors.

### **TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Remote Handbook November 2011**

The newly combined TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote handbook is an 88-page handbook that provides an overview of TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Remote program options. The handbook discusses regional contractors; DEERS; providers; enrollment and disenrollment; access standard; emergency, urgent, specialty, and routine care; referral and prior authorization requirements; health (including behavioral), pharmacy, and dental benefits; filing claims; appeals; grievances; and reporting fraud and abuse. Stateside and overseas contact information is also included. The handbook is available for download at: <http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart/product.aspx?id=836&CID=7&RID=3>

### **Older Vets to Get GI Bill Benefits**

The President has signed the VOW to Hire Heroes Act into law. There are several provisions in this law that will have a positive impact on the veteran unemployment rate. The most often reported of these are tax credits for employers who hire veterans and wounded warriors. However, one provision that is not being as widely reported provides a new shot at 12 months of the Montgomery GI Bill and will come as great news to unemployed veterans over the age of 35, The pre-9/11 veterans may soon qualify for as much as \$17,600 for education and training. This benefit can be used for finishing up a college degree, certification, vocational training, On-the-Job Training and more. For additional information about this law, please go to: <http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2011/11/vow-act-offers-older-vets-gi-bill-benefits/>

### **DoD Releases Updated Compensation & Benefits Handbook**

The Department of Defense (DoD) recently published the updated Wounded, Ill and Injured Compensation & Benefits Handbook, a comprehensive resource guide describing compensation and other benefits Servicemembers and their families would be entitled to upon separation or retirement as a result of serious injury or illness. The intent of the Handbook is to give seriously ill and injured Servicemembers and their families a quick reference guide to information, covering everything they may need during recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration. For a

copy of this handbook, please go to: <http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/files/2011/11/2011-DoD-Compensation-and-Benefits-Handbook1.pdf> and for further information about this, please go to: <http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/2011/11/17/dod-releases-updated-compensation-and-benefits-handbook-to-assist-wounded-ill-and-injured-service-members-and-their-families/>

### **Retirement Resources For Soldiers**

Soldiers and families making financial decisions for approaching retirement have help available to them in-person and online. At every major Army installation, a full-time retirement services officer (RSO) supports both retiring and retired Soldiers and families of the active and reserve components. The Army G-1's Retirement Services homepage offers 24/7 online support, at: <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/>. Information on the REDUX retired pay plan is available in the Career Status Bonus/REDUX Soldier Information section at: <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/PreRetirement.asp> For numerous resources regarding a variety of retirement topics, please go to: <http://www.ausa.org/resources/familyprograms/resources/InternetResources/Pages/RetireesVeterans.aspx>

### **Caregiverlist Caregiver Resources and Tools**

About Caregiverlist.com

<http://www.caregiverlist.com/AboutUs.aspx>

Caregiverlist.com is the nation's online destination dedicated to connecting seniors with quality senior care choices. Caregiverlist.com helps seniors and their loved ones define care needs, understand the many caregiving options, review daily prices and ratings of nursing homes nationwide and connect to senior home care agencies that meet Caregiverlist.com's checklist of quality standards. Caregiverlist.com is also a leading caregiving career and recruitment resource. Visit [www.Caregiverlist.com](http://www.Caregiverlist.com)

They provide customized information for seniors and for professional caregivers. Here is a link to their Widget page where you can grab and post the nursing home costs and ratings widget. We did contact 18,000 nursing homes nationwide to secure this information and are the only resource providing actual costs of nursing homes nationwide:

<http://www.caregiverlist.com/Widgets.aspx>

For those looking to gain more caregiving skills, we have a customized 10-hour online caregiver training which meets the requirements for states such as Illinois who have required caregiver training by licensed senior home care agencies:

<http://www.caregiverlist.com/SeniorCaregiverTraining.aspx>

In addition, we are the only professional caregivers career center and have lots of information for those working as a professional caregiver as some who first help a family member then realize this is a fulfilling career and it also has been helpful work for those who are grieving a loved one. Here is our Career Center and the C.N.A. Schools and Jobs widgets.

#### **Career Center:**

<http://www.caregiverlist.com/CaregivingJobs.aspx>

**Widgets:** A widget is an application that displays the featured content directly on another website. After embedding the widget using the code provided, no maintenance is required. Caregiverlist.com will update the content automatically.

<http://www.caregiverlist.com/Widgets.aspx/CNA>

<http://www.caregiverlist.com/Widgets.aspx/Jobs>

### **Tax Credits for Hiring Veterans**

In August, President Obama called on Congress to enact tax credits that will help get veterans back to work. The Returning Heroes Tax Credit provides businesses that hire unemployed veterans with a maximum credit of \$5,600 per veteran, and the Wounded Warriors Tax Credit offers businesses that hire veterans with service-connected disabilities with a maximum credit of \$9,600 per veteran. These tax credits were included in the American Jobs Act and were signed into law by President Obama on 21 November. For more information on these tax credits, visit the White House website at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/21/fact-sheet-returning-heroes-and-wounded-warrior-tax-credits>

### **Our Military Kids provide grants for assistance**

Our Military Kids grants, averaging \$400, with a \$500 limit per child, reach children with immediate and direct assistance for activities that renew their minds and spirits and relieve them of the stress, anxiety and worry they can experience when a military parent is on tour of duty away from home or is recovering from injury. Thanks to the generosity of foundations, corporations and hundreds of individuals, Our Military Kids has been able to fund a grant request for every eligible child.

#### How it works

Eligible families with children who are three years old through high school age, complete a simple one page application available for download at [www.ourmilitarykids.org](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org). Send the application along with the following, to Our Military Kids: a copy of the deployment orders; a copy of the child's military ID card or Form 1172, application for Uniformed Services Identification (DEERS Form) or a copy of the child's birth certificate (if parent who is deployed is listed as the mother or father on the birth certificate); and a flyer or other information that lists the activity and the fee for the activity. Grants will cover up to a 6 month instruction, lessons or tutoring for one future or ongoing activity/program with a maximum grant award of \$500.00 per child. A child may receive a second grant award if it has been at least 6 months since the last grant award and the parent is deployed for at least 365 days.

For further information contact: Our Military Kids, 6861 Elm Street, Suite 2A, McLean, VA 22101  
[www.ourmilitarykids.org](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org) 703-734-6654 / Fax 703-734-6503 / 1-866-691-6654

### **eBenefits - (My Gateway to Benefits information)**

#### What is eBenefits?

eBenefits is a portal; a central location for Veterans, Service Members, and their families to research, find, access, and, in time, manage their benefits and personal information.

eBenefits offers:

- A personalized workspace called My Dashboard that provides quick access to eBenefits tools. Using eBenefits tools, you can complete various tasks. You can apply for benefits, download your DD 214, view your benefits status, in addition to other actions as needed. This workspace is available to you once you have created an eBenefits account



- A catalog of links to other sites that provide information about military and Veteran benefits

### Accounts

- Anonymous (no need to login, very little access)
- Basic (login, limited access)
- Premium (login, unlimited access)

### We're working to streamline the processes for applying and accessing your benefits

The Veterans Administration (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) are committed to improving the online experience for you, our veterans and service members. Since our inception in 2009, we have added more than 30 features that allow direct access to your benefits and personal information. Look for additional feature and process enhancements in future quarterly releases.

### Tell Us About Your Experience

eBenefits is interested in your experience of the portal and the systems related to the registration process. And we offer three ways for you to share with us:

- Fill out a form
- Take a survey
- Test the site for us: Join our email list of people who would like to participate in site feedback and user testing sessions. Participation can be done through your browser.

### Why was eBenefits Created?

The President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors (Dole/Shalala) was established by Executive Order 13426 in March 2007. The Executive Order recommended the creation of a My eBenefits (aka eBenefits) web portal. The portal would serve wounded, injured, and ill Service Members, Veterans, their families, and their caregivers. It would provide a single sign-on, central access point to online benefits and related services.

[www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)

### **New Online Tools Provide Veteran Job-Seekers Secure Access to Military Records, Skill "Translators"**


Veterans now have on-demand access and can download official data about their military training and experience, which can be used to help them find jobs and continue their careers. Through VA's online My HealthVet portal found at: <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/index.html>, veterans can see official information about their military service, including deployment data, in-uniform experience, and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) codes which define the type of work performed and skills learned during their tour of duty. Veterans can then electronically download that information to their personal computers by using an enhanced version of the Blue Button located at: [https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?\\_nfpb=true&\\_nfto=false&\\_pageLabel=faqsHome#what\\_is\\_BB](https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&_nfto=false&_pageLabel=faqsHome#what_is_BB). They can also use this information when they search for jobs using the Veterans Job Bank at:

<https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/jobSearch/index>

### **Veterans Who Can Help Your Job Search**

Meeting the right people can make the difference in your next job search. The Military.com Veteran Career Network can connect you with over 1 million veterans working in companies, government agencies, career fields, industries or locations that may be of interest when searching for a job. To search for veterans willing to help individuals with their job search and career please go to the website: <http://benefits.military.com/vcn/search.do>

### **Play Military Trivia and Win an iPod**

Test your knowledge with our Military.com Trivia Challenge. Do you think you know military history and trivia? Here's how you win: For each question you answer correctly you will receive one point, and for each point you will earn an electronic raffle ticket. At the end of the month, Military.com will have a random drawing of all the tickets and pull out one to determine the winner. Play as little or as much as you want during the month, and the more questions you answer correctly, the greater your chance . To play now, please go to: <http://www.military.com/Trivia/Home?ESRC=mrvr.nl>

### **Brides Across America**

Brides Across America was born on a realization that our country needs to do more to support our troops and their families. Bringing bridal and military together is a marriage made in heaven! Bridal salons are uniting across America to donate and giving away wedding gowns to qualified military brides.

The wedding industry is making a difference and giving brides to be the opportunity to find the wedding gown of their dreams as well as alleviating financial stress of purchasing a wedding gown.

Each store will be preparing a select number of gowns to give away. Most of the gowns are samples and overstocks and are worth approximately \$500 to \$3000. Dresses range in sizes from 4-22 and will be given away on a first-come, first serve basis as long as you qualify.

Brides Across America is dedicated to make military brides dreams come true while, anxiously waiting the arrival of their loved one from overseas. <http://www.bridesacrossamerica.com>

### **TSA Launches New Toll Free Number for Air Travelers with Disabilities**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has launched a new helpline number for air travelers with disabilities and medical conditions. People in need of assistance can call TSA Cares toll free at 1-855-787-2227 before you travel for answers to questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint. TSA recommends that passengers call about 72 hours before traveling so that when needed, TSA Cares can coordinate checkpoint support with a TSA Customer Service Manager at the airport. For further information about the new TSA Number and assistance, please go to: <http://www.tsa.gov/press/releases/2011/1222.shtm>

### **Operation: Love ReUnited**

Operation: Love ReUnited is a non-profit, fully volunteer organization that offers professional photography sessions to military families and members who are getting ready to deploy, who are currently deployed, or those who are coming home.

Qualifications to Participate & The Gift of Photography:

To start the qualification to participate in our program you must be an immediate family member of or a member of the military. The military member must have orders to deploy or a letter of command. Un-accompanied tours are not qualified at this time, this includes Korea. The orders shall be a departure period of 4 or more months overseas and at least 3 months prior to returning to the United States.

The Sessions:

Each participating family or member may receive two sessions per year. The session choices are Pre-Deployment (with the service member), Saying Goodbye (documentary style at the farewell location), Already Deployed (service member has already deployed), and Homecoming. For more information on Op Love, visit the website at

[http:// www.oplove.org](http://www.oplove.org).

### **Operation Shower**

**Operation Shower** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide joyful baby showers for military families to ease the burden of deployment. Expecting a child can be incredibly lonely for women whose spouses are serving overseas. This organization throws baby showers for military moms-to-be. In its first four year existence, the group has hosted events for more than 400 women. <http://operationshower.org/>

### **Our Military Kids**

**Our Military Kids** provides substantial support in the form of grants to the children of National Guard and Military Reserve personnel who are currently deployed overseas, as well as the children of Wounded Warriors in all branches. The grants from **Our Military Kids** pay for participation in sports, fine arts, camps, and tutoring programs that nurture and sustain children while a parent is away in service to our country or recovering from injury. If you or your spouse are in the National Guard or Reserves and are deployed overseas, Our Military Kids can help pay for sports, fine arts and tutoring programs for your children. Our Military Kids provides grants to children of National Guard, Reserve, and Active Duty Wounded Warrior service members.

<http://www.ourmilitarykids.org/>

### **A Possible Simple Solution For Adults With Sleep Issues**

A simple solution for adults suffering from anxiety and sleep deprivation may be to listen to a recording of children's traditional nursery songs with a human heartbeat rhythm. Military New Parent Support Programs and Family Advocacy Programs have been giving the Heartbeat Lullabies recordings to new parents since 1994 to calm their crying babies and get them to sleep all night. Thousands of parents have sent written testimonies saying that listening to the Heartbeat Lullabies calmed their babies to sleep and also calmed them to sleep as well. In 2010, a clinical psychologist at a VA in Texas started offering the same CD to veterans who had to take multiple medications to aid with sleep and anxiety issues. Some also suffered from chronic pain, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or dementia. The positive impact listening to the Heartbeat Lullabies had on these veterans convinced the inventor, Terry Woodford, to make it accessible to Wounded Warriors and military family members with Anxiety and sleep problems. For additional information go to <http://www.adultlullabytherapy.com>

### **AER Increases Grants to Injured Soldiers**

Army Emergency Relief (AER) has increased the amount of its grants to wounded warriors evacuated from theater. In the past, Soldiers medically evacuated from Iraq or Afghanistan were eligible for a \$200 grant from AER to help them with incidentals at the new treatment location. However, in August, that amount was increased to \$500. The AER grant program began in August 2003 for Soldiers downrange evacuated for medical treatment. To apply for the benefit and other benefits that AER provides, either through no-interest loans or grants, go to: <http://www.army.mil/article/68121/> for a list of requirements. For more information about Army Emergency Relief,

visit their website at <http://www.aerhq.org/index.asp>, or call them toll free at: (866) 878-6378.

### **Retirement eStatements Begin**

As of Nov. 1, every military retiree had the ability to receive a monthly electronic statement known as an eRAS using myPay. The eRAS provides a complete summary of a military retiree's pay, deductions and benefits. Military retirees can view their eRAS by logging into myPay. Retirees who choose to register their email addresses with myPay will receive an email notification every month when their eRAS is available. The myPay website is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world, and changes retirees make using myPay take effect in just three to five business days. For more on all types of military pay, visit the Military.com Benefits Center at: <http://www.military.com/benefits/military-pay>

### **Educational benefit available to all Reserve Components**

Online tutoring and homework assistance are now available to families of all members of the National Guard and Reserve Components regardless of duty status. This is a collaborative effort between Department of Defense Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Library Program and DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. As a member of the Reserve Components continue to operate at a high tempo, it is critical that families are provided resources to focus on the health, well-being and education of students and children. National Guard and Reserve families can now receive online tutoring and homework assistance from Tutor.com at no charge. This program allows K-12 and adult students to connect to a live tutor online at anytime for help with homework, studying, exam preparation, college coursework and more. Guard and Reserve families accessing services at Tutor.com are matched with one of more than 2,500 carefully screened experts who include teachers, college professors, graduate students, selected undergraduates from accredited universities and other professionals. Tutor.com tutors are primarily based in the U.S. and Canada with some bilingual specialists located internationally. This service is offered at no cost to families of Guard and Reserve members.  
[www.Tutor.com/military/.com](http://www.Tutor.com/military/.com)

### **Financial Emergency Assistance available to Reserve Soldiers**

For families of deployed Reserve Soldiers, life goes on, and occasionally bad things happen. These may be unfortunate minor accidents or emergencies of many kinds that are not typically covered by insurance, which the deployed Soldier would normally be expected to handle or provide for.

Armed Forces Reserve Family Assistance Fund (AFRFAF) is here to help. If the oil burner breaks, or the roof leaks, or the car breaks down, if a relative is hospitalized out of town or a Family member needs to go on a school trip, AFRFAF can be there for you.

AFRFAF can help with a demonstrated need that can be handled by a referral to a craftsmen or professional willing to provide a needed service, or through a direct grant of funds to repair, make a trip, or buy a birthday present. Please note, AFRFAF can help with emergencies, but does not and cannot provide long-term financial assistance or income supplementation.

Please log on to [www.afraf.org/apply\\_assistance.htm](http://www.afraf.org/apply_assistance.htm) to find out if you qualify for assistance or to request assistance.

### **New VA Paralympic Website**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched its Paralympic Program website as part of an ongoing commitment to support the rehabilitation and recovery of disabled Veterans through participation in adaptive sports. VA wants to motivate, encourage and sustain participation and competition in adaptive sports among disabled Veterans and members of the Armed Forces as it keeps them focused and positive. One of the highlights of the new website is the "Success Stories" page. Veterans who participate in adaptive sports at any level as well as Paralympic competitors are encouraged to submit their stories. For more information, visit VA's Paralympic Program website at <http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/>.

### **Goggle Offers Free Calls**

Google announced that it is making it free for all uniformed military personnel with a valid U.S. military email address, such as a .mil address, to call the United States, right from Gmail. The free calls will be available through at least the rest of 2011. For more information and to begin making free calls, visit the Google website at: <http://www.google.com>.

### **Online Program for Military Children**

The Student Online Achievement Resource Program (SOAR) is a free online program that helps parents play an active role in their children's education. SOAR which currently has more than 60,000 users was designed for military families worldwide and it offers tips for parents to assist their children. SOAR maintains assessments aligned to different state standards in order to help make transitioning from one school system to another less complicated. For more information or to sign up, visit the SOAR website at: <http://www.soarathome.com/>. To learn more about this article, please go to: <http://www.military.com/military-report/online-program-for-military-children>.

### **M - [Silent Night World Premier](#)**

#### **Ticket Offer for Active and Veteran Military**

[Minnesota Opera](#) salutes active and veteran military with a 50% discount to any seat to any performance of Silent Night (Nov. 12, 15, 17, 19 and 20 at Ordway). Purchase tickets online at [mnopera.org](http://mnopera.org) or by calling 612-333-6669 M-F, 9a-6p. Limit up to 4 seats regularly priced \$20-200. **Online:** Enter vet50 and click "Add Coupon". You will see your savings applied. Do not complete order if coupon does not load. Service charges and other restrictions may apply. Offer ends Nov. 20, 2011. For additional information call the Ticket Office at 612-333-6669, M-F, 9am-6pm.

### **Operation Hero**

One of the armed services YMCA's keystone programs is Operation Hero. This program aids children from 6 to 12 years of age who are experiencing temporary difficulty in school, both socially and academically. Often these difficulties are caused by frequent moves and family disruption due to deployment. Referred by teachers, parents or school officials, the semester long program provides after-school tutoring and mentoring assistance in a small group with certified teachers. Operation Hero facilitates a positive environment, encourages responsible behavior, and gets children back on track in school, both academically and socially. Go to [www.asymca.org/wht-we-do-3/national-programs-services/OperationhHero](http://www.asymca.org/wht-we-do-3/national-programs-services/OperationhHero) for additional information.

### **Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)**

More than two million children nation-wide have parents or siblings who have served at least once in harm's way. For these military-connected children, their "new normal" includes deployment and separation from their loved ones. For some, it includes the death, injury or illness of those loved ones. Often the challenges faced by these children go unrecognized and unsupported within their own communities.

The MCEC, Living in the New Normal Public Engagement is an interactive, full-day collaboration among key community and state leaders. Participants are carefully selected from seven critical sectors: business, education, healthcare, faith, service organizations, service providers, and community leaders. The objective is to develop community-wide recognition of the challenges facing military-connected children and to create a "home-front" effort to help develop resilient children who can thrive through these challenges. Through careful facilitation, participants thoughtfully developed plans of action to enhance, synchronize and extend community systems of support for all military-connected children. The Public Engagement is preceded by a preparatory dinner, designed to set the stage, introduce the participants and provide background information.

The Public Engagement is one part of the Military Child Education Coalition's comprehensive Living in the New Normal initiative, developed through extensive research and collaboration with experts in the fields of resilience, health, and well-being, child development, education, trauma and grief. For more information please visit

[LINN.MilitaryChild.org](http://LINN.MilitaryChild.org)

### **M - Elk Hunt for a Disabled Veteran**

Midwest Outdoors Unlimited, in partnership with Northcountry Elk Ranch, Inc. and the MN Elk Breeders Association, is holding a one person elk hunt at the Northcountry Elk Ranch in Baudette, MN in December. Lodging, meals, the elk and the hunt are being donated by the organizations involved.

Midwest Outdoors Unlimited (MOU) CEO Ron Welle and board members Dean Ascheman and Jim Sursely are seeking nominations of disabled Veterans of Iraq/Afghanistan wars to be considered for the very unique opportunity in early December of this year. The hunter can include a spouse or guest to accompany him or her as a non-hunter. The hunt and facilities are handicap accessible.

This chance-of-a-lifetime hunt will be held in Tony Beckels Northcountry Elk Ranch in Baudette, Minn. The hunter will be allowed to harvest and take home a processed trophy elk. Donors are being sought for the mounting of the elk, which will allow the hunter to display the prize back home.

Welle, Ascheman and Sursely are accepting nominations and will serve as the selection committee. Entries must be in before Oct 15. For nomination forms and more information contact [midwestoutdoorsunlimited@yahoo.com](mailto:midwestoutdoorsunlimited@yahoo.com).

### **M - Pheasant Hunts for Disabled Veterans - 2011**

Over the past two years the Midwest Outdoors Unlimited (MOU), Disabled American Veterans of MN Foundation, several DAV Chapters, the Elks, the Minnesota V4V Trust Fund as well as St. Cloud area Veterans Service Organizations have teamed together to provide funds for pheasant hunts for disabled Veterans. The hunts are at the Sand Pines Pheasant Preserve near St. Joseph, Minnesota.

The last hunt in April 2011 was a great success. Disabled Veterans are encouraged to submit an application to participate in this event. The intent of these hunts is to give disabled Veterans the opportunity to hunt in a safe and handicap-accessible environment. There will be two hunts this fall on Oct. 15 and Oct. 22.

Enrollment applications and hunt information can be requested by contacting Ron Welle at [midwestoutdoorsunlimited@yahoo.com](mailto:midwestoutdoorsunlimited@yahoo.com). More information is also available at <http://sandpinepheasants.com/>.

### **Military Retirees To Pay Higher Health Premiums**

WASHINGTON -- Military retirees will pay slightly more for their health care starting Saturday, and more cost increases are on the way.



Premiums haven't been raised since 1994 and still will be just a fraction of what civilians pay. Under a change announced by the Defense Department on Thursday, individuals who enroll in the retiree program as of Saturday will pay \$260 annually, up from \$230, and it will be \$520 annually for a family, up from \$460.

Retirees already in the program will not see any increase until next year because they have already paid for this year. But "modest annual increases" are planned in the future, Cynthia Smith, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said.

Active duty service members get free health care and that will remain the same. But other personnel changes unpopular with service member may be in the offing due to U.S. budget problems, including changes to the system for retirement pay, which is under study.

### **Those Denied Purple Heart Should Reapply**

Active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers, as well as veterans, who have been Purple Heart awards for concussive or mild traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are encouraged to resubmit documentation for reconsideration of the medal. The injury must have occurred on or after 11 September 2001. Active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers must resubmit through their chains of command. Veterans should submit packages directly to Army Human Resources Command. Servicemembers can obtain copies of their deployment orders from the Veteran's Inquiry Branch by Emailing <mailto:veterans@conus.army.mil>. Veterans will also need to submit their DD Form 214. More information on submission requirements is available at Army Human Resources Command at: <http://www.military.com/veterans-report/those-denied-purple-heart-should-reapply>

### **Coaching Into Care**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a telephone service, Coaching into Care, to provide assistance to family members and friends trying to encourage their Veteran to seek health care for possible readjustment and mental health issues and help Veterans address problems and support other Veterans in making decisions about getting care. The Coaching into Care program offers unlimited, free coaching with family members or friends through a series of telephone calls. Callers can reach VA's Coaching into Care program at the toll-free number 1-888-823-7458, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. For immediate assistance callers should use the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, press 1 for Veterans. For additional information on this service, please go to: <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/>

### **Back-to-School Resources for Children of Deployed Service Members**

As children are back in school, meeting new teachers and classmates and having new routines and school work, they may experience a variety of emotions. This time can be particularly overwhelming for military children who are not living in a military community and may have a parent deployed or have endured frequent moves and school changes as well as having left friends and finding new ones. For some military children, dealing with deployment and separation presents an additional challenge to maintaining their focus on schoolwork. TRICARE now provides additional military resources to support these children on their website. For the complete list of deployment resources TRICARE offers, please go to <http://www.tricare.mil/deploymentresources>. To read this article in its entirety, please go to: [http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/press\\_article.aspx?fid=568](http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/press_article.aspx?fid=568)

### **WALZ ENCOURAGES SOLDIERS TO SUBMIT CLAIMS FOR STOP LOSS PAYMENTS**

Deadline fast approaching on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011

Mankato, MN – Today, Representative Walz urged servicemembers and veterans to apply for benefits they have earned.

Servicemembers, veterans and beneficiaries of service members who were involuntarily extended under stop loss between 9/11 and September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 are eligible for retroactive stop loss special pay of \$500 for every month/partial month served in stop loss status.

“In the past decade, we have asked so much of our men and women in uniform. They have served with honor and distinction every time they were called upon. I want to make sure they receive the benefits they have earned,” said Rep. Walz.

Congressman Walz supported the 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act, which authorized these additional retroactive payments to servicemembers.

For more information about eligibility and applications, please [click here](#).

### **Retroactive Traumatic Injury Benefits No Longer Just for OEF/OIF Injuries**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is extending retroactive traumatic injury benefits to Servicemembers who suffered qualifying injuries during the period of 7 October 2001 to 30 November 2005, regardless of the geographic location where the injuries occurred. Effective 1 October, the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Traumatic Injury Protection benefit, known as TSGLI, will pay for all qualifying injuries incurred during this period. This retroactive benefit is payable for all qualifying injuries incurred during this period. This retroactive benefit is payable whether or not the Servicemember had SGLI coverage at the time of the injury. TSGLI provides a payment ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to Servicemembers sustaining certain severe traumatic injuries. To read this article in full please go to:

<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2169>. For more information or to apply for a TSGLI payment, Servicemembers and Veterans should go to: <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm> or contact their branch of service TSGLI Office.

### **Operation Thanksgiving Eagle**

AUSA Family Programs is pleased to announce that we are once again partnering with Harmony Hearth and sponsors BAE Systems and Raytheon to continue our Operation Thanksgiving Eagle (OTE) free book project. Operation Thanksgiving Eagle is author Debbie Fink's effort to recognize and thank military children for the daily sacrifices they make by having parents who serve to protect America's freedom. Debbie Fink's children's activity book entitled it's a Family Thanksgiving! A Celebration of an American Tradition for Children and Their Families will be provided on a first come first serve basis. This holiday workbook reminds us why we hold strong to our history, our heritage and our family traditions and how we draw inspiration from our heroes and our heroines. Operation Thanksgiving Eagle books will also be distributed at the Family Programs exhibit booth in the AUSA Pavilion during the AUSA Annual Meeting. To request a book for your children please complete the form at: <http://www.ausa.org/resources/familyprograms/OpThanksgivingEagle/Pages/default.aspx>

### **App for Arlington**

Arlington-based information technology service provider Segue Technologies Inc. has developed a free smartphone app that helps locate grave sites at the Arlington National Cemetery. The app, available free-of-charge for both iPhone and Android phones, lets the user identify the location of a specific grave using first, last and/or middle name as well as dates of birth or death. A map is provided in addition to the grave's location. To find the app for the iPhone, please go to: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/arlington-national-cemetery/id455238628?ls=1&mt=8>.

### **M - Sight for Soldiers**

The program provides free laser vision correction surgery to troops in the National Guard and Reserves.

Unlike those serving in regular armed forces, these soldiers typically can't access such surgery through military channels, and can't afford it on their own. Having good vision without glasses or contact lenses isn't just a convenience in an environment like Afghanistan or Iraq. Glasses can be broken or lost, and the dry climate, high altitude and dust are not conducive to contacts. For Soldiers in harms way, good vision can be a lifesaver. Over 500 Soldiers have benefited from the Sight for Soldiers program made possible by a number of local ophthalmologists, including Neal Sher, MD Eye Care Associates, and the Phillips Eye Institute, the regions only specialty eye hospital. In 2004, Dr. Sher began offering the surgery free to a few Soldiers. Phillips Eye Institute agreed to waive the fees, so soldiers have no out-of-pocket costs. Word spread amongst Soldiers and their families and eventually up the chain of command. In 2008, Dr. Sher received a personal letter of commendation from Gen. David Petraeus, the Commanding General Multi-National Force – Iraq. To learn more about this program contact Phillips Eye Institute at 612-775-8841 or visit [www.phillipseyeinstitute.com](http://www.phillipseyeinstitute.com)

#### **M - Gold Star Mothers and Families Day - Sept. 25**

The last Sunday in September is reserved to honor the mothers who have lost children in service to the United States. Gold Star Mothers have given so much, and continue to give back to the community through voluntary acts. Minnesota is host to an official Gold Star Mothers Chapter. The chapter also serves mothers in North and South Dakota. Learn more about the Minnesota Gold Star Mothers at [www.goldstarmoms.com](http://www.goldstarmoms.com). Find the Minnesota Chapter page under the "Depts & Chapter" menu.

#### **M - Tee it Up For the Troops Golf Weekend - Sept. 9-11**

Golfers are invited to play golf and help acknowledge and honor the sacrifice of all military Veterans and their families. Soldiers and Veterans golf free. Immediate family members receive 50 percent off. Tee times and military ID required. For more details and to view participating golf courses visit <http://teeitupforthetroops.org/states/minnesota>.

#### **M - VA 5K Fun Run/Walk/Roll - Sept. 10**

Camp Ripley Biennial Open House - Sept. 18

A ceremony to welcome home Vietnam Veterans. Events include: car show, welcome home ceremony, vendors, tank display, food and beverages. For more information contact Camp Ripley staff at (320)-632-7296 or click on this link [goo.gl/yg6aZ](http://goo.gl/yg6aZ).

#### **M - Career and Job Fair - Sept. 19**

Congressman John Kline is hosting a career and job fair on Monday Sept. 19, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Eagan Community Center. For more information and registration instructions please visit <http://kline.house.gov/>.

#### **M- MACV 4th Annual Benefit Event - Sept. 23 Friday**

September 23, 2011 934th Fort Snelling Officers' Club 6:00 pm Silent Auction & Reception 7:30 pm Dinner Followed by Live Music from the Tom Higgs Trio Call 651.291.8756 or visit [www.mac-v.org/fundraiser2011.html](http://www.mac-v.org/fundraiser2011.html) to reserve your seat today! MACV 4th Annual Benefit Event Serving those who served us.. Learn more about MACV at [www.mac-v.org](http://www.mac-v.org) MACV is a nonprofit that provides assistance to Minnesota veterans and their families. By attending this event you are helping us raise funds to support our work with veterans in need. Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been assisting veterans for over 19 years, helping over 5,500 veterans and their families. It is estimated that 1% of the veterans in this state, or close to 4,100, will experience an episode of homelessness this year. MACV is there to assist. Tables: \$650 Tables include seating for 8 and Table Sponsor sign Individual Tickets: \$50 For more information about this event or if you would like to purchase tables or tickets please call 651.291.8756 or visit [www.mac-v.org/fundraiser2011.html](http://www.mac-v.org/fundraiser2011.html) to reserve your seat today! Join Us at the 4th Annual Benefit Event Serving those who served us.. Exterior View: Fort Snelling Officers' Club.

The 4th Annual Benefit Event will be held Friday Sept. 23 at the 934th Fort Snelling Officers' Club. Silent auction and reception start at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and live music starting at 4:30 p.m. Call (651) 291-8756 or visit <http://www.mac-v.org/fundraiser2011.html> to reserve a seat.

### **M - Women Veterans Event - Sept. 27**

There will be a Women Veterans health and wellness event at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System on Sept. 27. For more information visit <http://www.stcloud.va.gov/>.

### **M -Physically Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt**

The 20th Annual Physically Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt takes place Oct. 4 - 6, at Camp Ripley near Little Falls. Compelling story lines to fit a variety of media are abundant, and we invite media representatives to cover the event. Prior coordination is required to access the hunt. Please contact Dennis Erie at (320) 255-6394 or Barry Venable at (320) 255-6381 to arrange coverage opportunities.

### **New Office Aims to Strengthen Families Financially**

A government office dedicated to protecting Servicemembers and their families from financial predators and pitfalls officially opened for business this week. As the military arm of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Office of Servicemember Affairs is intended to strengthen military families financially and to serve as an advocate on their behalf. Since there are 50 states, each with different laws, military families may be unaware of the protections in the state where they live. The office will work to ensure Servicemembers and their families receive the financial protection and education they deserve by insuring that military personnel are provided a quality financial education. Additionally, the office will monitor consumer complaints and the responses to those complaints, and work with other federal and state agencies to help resolve issues. To report a financial issue or complaint, Servicemembers and their families can visit the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau website at <http://www.consumerfinance.gov>. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=64862>

### **Army Gold**

Army OneSource developed Army Gold as an educational curriculum offered to the Army community using a virtual environment which will appeal to the younger generation of Soldiers and Family members. Army Gold is an interactive virtual world and online game that combines entertainment, social networking and teaching in the areas of financial literacy and home buying. Progression through the game helps players become more financially savvy as they learn how to save, spend and invest money. Quizzes are embedded throughout the game, and as a player successfully passes the quizzes, his/her rank and income increases. Army Gold is accessible online from any location on the Army OneSource web portal. For access to Army Gold, please go to: <http://www.myarmyonesource.com/CommunitiesandMarketplace/FinancialLiteracyGame/default.aspx>

### **Back to school shopping at Military Exchanges**

Back to school shopping seems to come earlier and earlier every year! This August, make it easy by using your Military Exchanges – AAFES, for all of the family's back to school needs. Whether it is new clothes, electronics, school supplies, or a new computer, military families should check out the savings offered by AAFES. The Exchange offers almost every imaginable item and service found in a mainstream mall, convenience store, gas station, or restaurant. When families use their exchange benefits, there is no sales tax and often free shipping on millions of items. On average, a family who shops at their Military Exchange saves 24 percent. Shoppers can visit a retail store on their military installation, shop through the catalog, or go online at: <http://www.shopmyexchange.com/>

### **Little-known TRICARE Benefits**

There are several benefits from TRICARE that are not so well-known. Some of these benefits include: (1) TRICARE beneficiaries can sign up and receive an explanation of benefits (EOB) electronically and eliminate the

cost and clutter of paper EOBs; (2) members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet 60 are able to purchase TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) (<http://www.tricare.mil/trr>); (3) there are no copayments or cost-shares for the well-child benefit (<http://www.tricare.mil/baby>); and (4) hospice care is a zero-deductible benefit. For more information about the hospice benefit, beneficiaries can contact their regional health care contractor or their TRICARE Area Office (<http://www.tricare.mil/contactus>). Beneficiaries can view a list of covered TRICARE services on TRICARE's website at: <http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/ProfileFilter.do;jsessionid=T4RP4kRyGNG1pJhphjg1nxT2vCf1PcZkhKfz1gJNsljqSbTMY4jj!60821720?puri=%2Fhome%2FMedical%2FIsItCovered> or contact their regional health care contractor for more information.

## **Veterans Writing Project**

Veterans Writing Project (VWP) is a 501(c)3 non-profit that provides no-cost writing seminars and workshops for veterans and family members. The founder began this organization because he knew how much writing helped him overcome Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after serving in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Rwanda, Iraq and Darfur. Currently hundreds of thousands of returning veterans have PTSD. VWP provides these seminars and workshops in the Washington, DC area at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and to student veterans from all over the region through the veterans' symposium at the George Washington University. This fall, VWP will expand onto Army bases and other universities and will host their first veterans writing conference in conjunction with the Johns Hopkins University's graduate writing program next spring. To make a donation to this project, please go to: <http://scranthology.com/> and enter Amazon through the portal on this site and then shop. A portion of each purchase you make goes directly to the Veterans Writing Project to help provide no-cost writing seminars for our veterans. To learn more about VWP, please go to: <http://veteranswriting.org/>

## **Nine-month Army Deployments to Begin in 2012**

Army officials announced beginning 1 January, most Soldiers will deploy for nine months, giving them more time at home between deployments. Most augmentees and those with particular skills or in low-density skill sets and grades will remain on 12-month deployments. Implementation of this change is based on the projected demand for Army forces, and remains contingent on global security conditions and combatant commanders' requirements. This change in policy, to be implemented fully by 1 April 2012, will affect Soldiers in all named operations, including Afghanistan, Kosovo and Egypt. The Army will continue to review how to increase the amount of time Soldiers spend at home, depending on the amount of time they are deployed. To read more about the extended dwell time, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=64944>

## **Veterans in Piping – Training**



The United Association of Plumbers, Pipefitters and Sprinklerfitters (UA) has partnered with the U.S. military to create the UA Veterans In Piping (VIP) Program, which provides returning vets with 16 weeks of accelerated welding training. But before that career training begins, they kick off the program with an additional two weeks of transitional training to help returning veterans to adjust to civilian life – a process that can be especially difficult for those who joined the military right after high school.

## **VA Creates Women Veterans Call Center - Outreach Effort Launched**

The Women Veterans Health Care program has made significant changes in the last few years to enhance the health care offered to eligible women Veterans. This progress includes:

- Adopting key policies to improve access and enhance services for women Veterans;
- Implementing comprehensive primary care for women Veterans;



- Conducting cutting-edge research on the effects of military service on women's lives;
  - Improving communication and outreach to women Veterans; and
  - Providing mental health, homelessness and other services designed to meet the unique needs of women Veterans
- For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) and [www.publichealth.va.gov/](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/)

### **M - Guthrie Theater Special Offer**

Military members and their families save 50 percent on tickets from June 18 through August 28, priced from \$14.50-\$29 at the Wurtele Thrust Stage. Call the Guthrie Box Office at 612-377-2224 and mention the "military" offer. For more information on available shows at the Wurtele Thrust Stage visit [http://www.guthrietheater.org/visit/the\\_building/wurtele\\_thrust\\_stage](http://www.guthrietheater.org/visit/the_building/wurtele_thrust_stage).

### **M - Veterans Only Job Fair, Aug. 11**

A Veterans job fair will be held August 11, at TCF Bank Stadium from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information visit <http://recruitmilitary.com/expos/379-Minneapolis/candidates/exhibitors>.

### **TRICARE Pharmacy Benefits - There's an App for That!**

TRICARE and Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI) are pleased to announce the launch of the TRICARE Express Rx mobile app and mobile-optimized website. These tools allow TRICARE beneficiaries to manage their prescriptions and access important health information safely and securely from anywhere using their smart phone. Among the new features, the app and mobile website allows beneficiaries to register for TRICARE pharmacy home delivery and switch current prescriptions over to home delivery. Beneficiaries can also order home delivery refills, check order status and look up information on their current prescriptions. To ensure security and data protection, beneficiaries must register through the member portal at <http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE> before logging in to the Express Rx app or mobile-optimized site. Smartphone users can download the app for free by going to [www.express-scripts.com/mobile](http://www.express-scripts.com/mobile) or by using services like the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace. The mobile-optimized pharmacy website can be accessed at <http://m.esrx.com>. For more information about TRICARE pharmacy, visit <http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacy>.

### **TRICARE Expands Prescription Service**

E-prescribing offers convenience and lower costs to TRICARE beneficiaries by giving healthcare providers easy access to the TRICARE Uniform Formulary. TRICARE is encouraging all providers to begin using E-prescribing for TRICARE beneficiaries. For TRICARE beneficiaries who choose to receive their prescriptions through home delivery, providers can submit a prescription via E-prescribing to TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. However, E-prescriptions cannot be routed to Military Treatment Facility pharmacies at this time. To learn more about Home Delivery, visit the TRICARE website at: <http://www.tricare.mil/>

### **The Department of Defense Voluntary Education Program**

The Department of Defense (DoD) is ensuring that Servicemembers have readily available opportunities to pursue a postsecondary education to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families. DoD has established a new policy, effective Jan. 1, 2012, under which all schools participating in the Tuition Assistance (TA) Program must have a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department. The MOU outlines the commitments and agreements between an educational institution and the DoD which states that educational institutions must agree to one single tuition rate that will apply to all Servicemembers, regardless of branch of service. It also requires that schools be accredited by an agency recognized by the Department of Education, abide by DoD and the Military Services' regulatory guidance on voluntary education, and adhere to the principles and criteria established by the Servicemembers' Opportunity Colleges. To learn more about this memorandum, please



go to the MOU website at: <http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=VOLED:HOME:0> or to read the entire article, click: <http://cs.mhf.dod.mil/content/dav/mhf/QOL-Library/MHF/261583.html>

### **VA Launches Childcare Pilot**

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the launch of free, drop-in childcare service centers at three VA medical centers to an audience of more than 700 participants attending the Fifth National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues 15-17 July at the Hyatt Regency, Washington on Capitol Hill. The pilot centers are part of VA's continuing effort to improve access to health care for eligible Veterans, particularly the growing number of women Veterans. Congress established this childcare initiative as part of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 which was signed by the President in May 2010. All the pilot childcare centers will be operated onsite by licensed childcare providers. Drop-in services are offered free to Veterans who are eligible for VA care and visiting a facility for an appointment. For more information about the three sites and childcare details, other VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) and <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth>.

### **HUD, VA to Provide Housing, Support to Homeless Vets**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide \$46.2 million to the public housing agencies in 50 states and the District of Columbia to supply permanent housing and case management for 6,790 homeless veterans. This funding, from HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) is a coordinated effort by HUD, VA and local housing agencies to provide permanent housing for homeless veterans in which participating vets rent privately owned housing and generally contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. Homeless veterans are referred to the public housing agencies for these vouchers, based on a variety of factors, most importantly, the need for and willingness to participate in case management. The HUD-VASH program includes both the rental assistance the voucher provides and comprehensive case management through VA medical centers. To read more about this program, please go to:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=64679>

### **TRICARE For Retired Reservists**

Retired reservists can now get a Department of Defense (DoD) Self-service Logon (DS Logon) account at any TRICARE Service Center (TSC) worldwide. Once they have a DS Logon, they can use it to go online to purchase TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) health care coverage. To locate the nearest TSC, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil/contacts>. Retired reservists may also continue to go to designated VA regional offices to complete in-person-proofing and get a DS Logon account. To locate a VA regional office, visit the VA website at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/vba/benefits/offices.asp>. For more information about TRICARE's health care benefits for members of the Reserve and National Guard, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve>.

### **TRICARE Informs Beneficiaries About ID Card Changes**

TRICARE beneficiaries should make sure they have their Social Security number (SSN) committed to memory because it will not be found on new Department of Defense (DoD) ID cards. As of 1 June 2011, SSNs will no longer be printed on new ID cards issued to members of the Uniformed Services, retirees and family members. The new cards will look basically the same, but will have a unique DoD identification number in place of the SSN. For those eligible for benefits, such as health care, a DoD Benefits number (DBN) will be on the back. Existing ID cards are good until they expire, including retiree cards marked "INDEF." Beneficiaries who would like a new ID without their SSN are advised to make an appointment before making the trip to an ID card facility. TRICARE beneficiaries and providers can get more information, see ID card samples and view frequently asked questions at <http://www.tricare.mil/ssn>. To read this article in full, please go to:

[http://www.tricare.mil/Pressroom/news\\_print.aspx?fid=722](http://www.tricare.mil/Pressroom/news_print.aspx?fid=722)

## **Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Affiliation Program Launched**

The Army has launched the IRR Affiliation Program (IAP) to provide IRR Soldiers and their families with a local network of support to ensure their well-being and readiness. The focus of the program will be on communicating support and resources versus participation in unit training events.

[.RELEASE: Army Reserve and Army National Guard partner with U.S. Army Human Resources Command to launch the IRR Affiliation Program](#)

[.About: Individual Ready Reserve \(IRR\) Affiliation Program](#)

## **Military Spouses Get Help With Professional Licenses**

State Liaison and Educational Opportunity, a Department of defense (DoD) programs within the Office of Military Community and Family Policy, is making it easier for military spouses to maintain professional licenses as they move from state to state. The announcement states that 16 states have adopted laws, or are close to doing so, making it easier for military spouses to work in their career fields. 33 percent of working military spouses work in fields that require licenses, mostly nursing and teaching, and these laws would allow the working spouse to acquire employment more rapidly. The state liaison office formed partnerships with state agencies and professional associations to educate state lawmakers about the unique challenges military families have to face in hopes of assisting them to lessen their burdens. To read additional information about this topic, please go to:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=64285>

## **M - Free Admission for Military Personnel at Valley Fair July 2-4**

Valleyfair is honoring our Hometown Heroes over Fourth of July Weekend with free admission for all active or retired Military personnel. Military personnel may present proof of service at any Valleyfair entrance turnstile to receive free admission. Free admission is valid on Saturday, July 2, Sunday, July 3 and Monday, July 4, 2011. Regularly discounted military admission tickets are also available for family members of military personnel.

## **M - Veterans Only Job Fair August 11, 2011**

The event will be held at TCF Bank Stadium from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. TCF Bank Stadium is located at 420 23rd Avenue SE - Minneapolis, Minn., 55455. Details located at: <http://recruitmilitary.com/expos/379-Minneapolis/candidates/exhibitors>.

## **VA Caregiver Support**

The Department of Veterans Affairs and Easter Seals are providing comprehensive caregiver training to family caregivers of eligible post-9/11 veterans. New benefits also include a monthly stipend, mental health services and possible medical care for caregivers. Veterans can download a copy of the family caregiver program application at the VA's Caregiver Support webpage at: <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/> This application enables the veteran to designate a primary family caregiver and secondary family caregivers as well. Caregiver support coordinators are stationed at 153 VA medical centers and are available by phone at 877-222-8387 to assist veterans and family caregivers with the application process.

## **New Red Cross Emergency Number**

Beginning 13 June, the American Red Cross is moving to a single telephone number for its emergency communication services. Servicemembers and their families will be able to use one toll-free number, 877-272-7337, to send an urgent message to a Servicemember following the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, the birth of a Servicemember's child or grandchild, or when a family faces other emergencies. Additional Red Cross services will also be available. For those people stationed overseas, the three options for calling will remain the same: calling 877-272-7337 direct, accessing the number through a military operator or calling their local Red Cross station.

### **Save An Average of 30%**

DeCA has released their National Guard and Reserve Sales schedules! The Guard/Reserve On-site Sales Program provides the commissary benefit to Guard/Reserve members and their families who live in areas which are not located near an existing commissary store. Any authorized commissary shopper is eligible to attend these sales events which can provide a savings of 30% or more. For information on how to have a sale near you, contact your unit who can then call the nearest Commissary to discuss the possibility. For future On-site sale location and dates, please click: [http://www.commissaries.com/guard\\_reserve\\_sales.cfm](http://www.commissaries.com/guard_reserve_sales.cfm)

### **Mental Health Options for TRICARE Beneficiaries**

Military families make great sacrifices and face extraordinary challenges and uncertainty that can take a heavy toll. TRICARE beneficiaries should know about the programs and tools available to help military families cope with the burdens of military life. The TRICARE Mental Health Resource Center located at:

<http://www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth> provides confidential access to mental health resources for beneficiaries and their families. Additionally, beneficiaries can learn how to find a behavioral health care provider, make appointments and select different treatment options. TRICARE also offers the TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) which provides beneficiaries Internet videoconferencing with a licensed behavioral health clinician from the comfort of home. TRIAP counseling is short-term, solution-focused and non-medical, designed to help beneficiaries cope with challenges such as deployment stress, relationships, personal loss and parent-child communications. To learn more about this benefit, go to: <http://www.tricare.mil/triap>. For contact information, go to <http://www.tricare.mil/contacts>, and for more information about telemental health care, visit <http://www.tricare.mil/TelementalHealth>.

### **Injury Insurance Expanded**

The VA recently announced expansion of the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection Program (TSGLI) to include injuries Servicemembers and veterans received outside of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF). Originally, Congress made it retroactive to October 7, 2001, for qualifying members who received injuries incurred in the combat zones of OEF or OIF however, in 2010; Public Law 111-275 removed the OEF/OIF requirement. As a result, TSGLI coverage will be provided retroactively for members who incurred qualifying severe injuries or illnesses between October 7, 2001 and November 30, 2005, regardless of where the injury occurred, and regardless of whether they had SGLI coverage at the time. TSGLI covers a wide range of injuries and losses, including amputations and certain traumatic brain or other traumatic injuries among many others. Qualifying Servicemembers and veterans will be able to submit claims starting October 1, 2011. For more information on TSGLI and a complete list of qualifying conditions, visit the VA TSGLI website at <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm>.

### **VA Expands TSGLI Eligibility**

Servicemembers and Veterans previously ineligible to receive insurance payments for some injuries will soon have the opportunity to submit claims for the [Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection](#) program (TSGLI). Effective Oct. 1, 2011, servicemembers outside a combat zone who suffered a qualifying injury - - such as loss of a limb or an eye -- may be entitled to \$25,000 up to a \$100,000 maximum total for all qualifying

injuries received between Oct. 7, 2001, and Nov. 30, 2005, regardless of where the injury occurred. For more information on the Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) and a complete list of qualifying losses, visit the VA [Servicemembers and Veterans Group Life Insurance website](#) and the [Stand-To! Website](#). Information from: <http://www.military.com/military-report/va-expands-tsgli-eligibility?ESRC=miltrep.nl>.

### **Military Discounts with valid ID**

Nearly 1.5 million Americans actively served in our military and armed forces as of 2010, whether in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force or Coast Guard. Another 800,000-plus served in the Reserves. With so many men and women defending and aiding our country under difficult conditions, it's not surprising retailers, restaurants, service providers, and travel and entertainment companies now offer a wide variety of discounts in grateful thanks.

As our way of thanking those who serve, we've compiled a detailed list of ways to save for veterans, all active branches and, in some instance, the families who stand behind them. Participation may vary at different locations, so check first.

<http://www.giftcardgranny.com/blog/military-discounts/>

### **Fed Begins Phase-Out Of Paper Benefit Checks**

On 1 May, the first step in ridding paper checks for federal benefits began. People newly applying for federal benefits as of that date must choose an electronic payment option at the time they apply for benefits, paper checks are no longer an option. The policy applies to disability payments, GI Bill payments, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income as well as other benefits through the Veterans Affairs Department. Anyone currently receiving federal benefits by paper check must switch to direct deposit by March 1, 2013. To switch you can go to <http://www.GoDirect.org>, call the Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center's toll-free help line at 800-333-1795, or speak to someone at your personal bank or credit union. Those who would prefer to receive their payments on a prepaid debit card, or who do not have an account at a financial institution, can receive a Direct Express Debit MasterCard card through GoDirect.org. No action is required if you already receive your checks electronically. To read more about the Feds going "paperless", please go to: <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2011/04/military-direct-deposit-federal-benefits-042911w/>

### **The American Legion Offers Financial Assistance**

Legionnaires and Sons of the American Legion may be eligible for financial assistance through the Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF). Eligible members may receive up to \$1,500 and Legion posts may apply for up to \$5,000 in emergency assistance. Applicants must have been displaced from their primary residence due to a declared natural disaster and provide proof of out-of-pocket expenses, including, but not limited to, temporary housing, food, water and clothing. Detailed information and an application for NEF assistance may be downloaded from the American Legion website at <http://www.legion.org/emergency>. For more information, call American Legion customer service at (800) 433-3318.

### **Blue Star Museums: FREE Admission from Memorial Day to Labor Day!**

Through the Blue Star Museums program, all military members and their families will receive free admission to more than 1,300 museums in all of the 50 states and the District of Columbia from Memorial Day, 30 May, through Labor Day, 5 September. Blue Star Museums is a partnership between Blue Star Families, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and museums across the country, and was designed to provide a fun outlet for about a million children who have a deployed parent. This will be only the second year for the program, but more than 300,000 military families participated last year, visiting more than 950 sites across the country. To find the Blue Star Museums near you, please go to the NEA website by clicking: <http://www.arts.gov/national/bluestarmuseums/index2011.php>

## **Purple Heart Award for Concussion Injuries**

The Army encourages Soldiers and veterans who were previously denied the Purple Heart for concussion injuries to resubmit documentation for reconsideration. Soldiers currently serving in the Active Army, Army Reserves or Army National Guard must resubmit their request through the first General officer in their current chain of command to the U.S. Army Human Resources Command for reconsideration. Veteran inquiries should be sent directly to Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Attention: Awards and Decorations branch. Submission for reconsideration is not a guarantee of approval, merely a guarantee of fair and impartial review. This policy is retroactive to 11 September 2001.

## **"TRICARE TV" Offers Beneficiaries a New Resource for Information**

Starting now TRICARE beneficiaries who want to learn more about their health care plan and how it works can get short, relevant tips once a month with the launch of TRICARE TV. The videos are short and easy to follow, with the first episode called "What Is TRICARE?" which gives beneficiaries an overview of TRICARE health care plans and some of the special programs offered. TRICARE is already active on social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter which provide beneficiaries timely updates on TRICARE benefits in a variety of convenient formats. To view TRICARE TV, beneficiaries can visit TRICARE's YouTube channel or <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter>. Subscribe to get e-alerts when a new episode is posted by going to <http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions> or through the e-mail link at the TRICARE media center.

## **DeCA Newsletter: Guard and Reserve Sales Schedule**

DeCA has started a monthly newsletter for customers who have asked for e-mail updates on commissary on-site sales. Customers who subscribe to the newsletter receive the on-site sales schedule, as well as sale information, points of contact, program updates and more. This newsletter is a one-stop shop for on-site sale details. Additionally, a special feature of this newsletter is that it offers the ability to send updates to customers if sale information changes; customers simply indicate the state in which they normally attend on-site sales when they subscribe to the newsletter, and if the details change for a sale in that state after they have announced it, DeCA will send out a special alert just to those customers. Customers can subscribe to this newsletter by visiting <http://www.commissaries.com/guardreserve>.

## **Our Community Salutes**

<http://www.ourcommunitysalutes.com/about.html>

## **Purple Heart Eligibility for Concussion Injuries**

The Army has provided clarifying guidance for awarding the Purple Heart for concussion injuries, including mild traumatic brain injuries and concussive injuries that do not result in a loss of consciousness. This is a procedural clarification and not a change to the standards. The Army encourages Soldiers and Veterans who were previously denied the Purple Heart for concussive injuries to resubmit documentation for reconsideration. Currently serving soldiers should resubmit through the first General Officer in their current chain of command. Veteran inquiries should be routed directly to Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, attn: Awards and Decorations Branch. This policy is retroactive to September 11, 2001.

## **VA Caregiver Support**



On May 9, staff in VA's Office of Care Management and Social Work will open the application process for eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers to designate their Family Caregivers.

Additional services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program.

The program builds on the foundation of Caregiver support now provided at VA and reflects what families and clinicians have long known; that Family Caregivers in a home environment can enhance the health and well-being of Veterans under VA care.

Starting May 9th, Veterans may download a copy of the Family Caregiver program application (VA CG 10-10) at [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov). The application enables the Veteran to designate a primary Family Caregiver and secondary Family Caregivers if needed. Caregiver Support Coordinators are stationed at every VA medical center and via phone at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) to assist Veterans and their Family Caregivers with the application process.

"Providing support to Family Caregivers who sacrifice so much to allow Veterans to remain at home surrounded by their loved ones, is very important to us at VA. We offer a range of Caregiver support services including training, counseling and respite care to ensure that our caregivers have the tools and support they need to continue in their care giving role," said Deborah Amdur, VA's Chief Consultant for Care Management and Social Work. "We appreciate the patience, support and assistance we have received from Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, and the greater Caregiver community in shaping this program and bringing this new VA program to our wounded warriors and their dedicated Family Caregivers."

## **M - Strands of Hope**

The Strands of Hope mission was born, to make heart-to-heart connections through jewelry infused with compassion, love and hope. We envisioned reaching out to anyone struggling with a life challenge, as well as all those who give service to others through their concern and support.

Strands of Hope® necklace kits come in a variety of colors. Rich red, misty grey, striking black and delicate pink are just a few. There are designs incorporating semi-precious stones, and designs accented with freshwater pearls. There is a necklace for every personality and for every mood. Remember, a Strands of Hope® necklace is a heartfelt way to show another that you care, a gift that reaches out. Creating a necklace to keep for yourself is also a wonderful way to start conversations and support this mission.

Each Strands of Hope® kit comes in a cream-colored organza gift bag and contains everything you will need to make a finished

A percentage of all sales will be given to charity. [www.strandsofhope.com](http://www.strandsofhope.com)

## **Operation Shower**

Operation Shower is about celebrating and honoring military families. Operation Shower is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides joyful baby showers for military families to ease the burden of deployment.

For military families who are expecting a new baby and are experiencing or have recently experienced deployment, we accomplish our mission through:



- hosting amazing baby showers
- delivering high-quality products
- creating a shared experience
- partnering with organizations to provide value-added services, such as health-related information

## History

Operation Shower began in March 2007, when LeAnn Morrissey, looking for a way to give back to her uncle who was deployed overseas, was asked to send a card to 4 women who were expecting babies while their spouses were deployed. LeAnn decided to try to do much more for these families. She set out with family and friends to send a “shower in a box” to the four military families who were expecting babies while the husband was deployed. The overwhelming support she received putting these boxes together and the messages of thanks she received from these moms left her with little doubt that this was something worth doing — over and over again! She joined with Kris Jackson, to hold the first unit-wide shower at Ft. Bragg, NC in June 2007. From that point forward, they made it official and Operation Shower was born!

As of October 2010, the Operation Shower team has, through the generous donations of individuals and corporations and through volunteer-power, showered over 400 women. We have held 12 unit-wide showers on military bases across the country for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and National Guard. Operation Shower feels blessed and honored to be able to join with these women for a special celebration during what is otherwise an often stressful time. The showers provide wonderful items for the new babies and moms, and help bring the women together to celebrate with others in the same situation.

Operation Shower was founded specifically because we know that moms in a military family who hold it all together at home — moms who go through a pregnancy without their spouse by their side, deployed to a another part of the world, proudly serving our country, but wishing they could do more for those at home — these moms deserve our support, our thanks, our love and of course, they deserve a party!

[www.operationshower.org](http://www.operationshower.org)

## About Snowball Express

Snowball Express started in early 2006 with a simple idea: Provide hope and new memories to the children of military fallen heroes who have died while on active duty since 9/11.

America should honor and pay tribute to the children of those military fallen heroes who have died while honorably serving since 9/11. In December of 2006, nearly 900 family members from all across America and the world gathered in Southern California for an unforgettable holiday gathering. Kids and widows discovered they weren't alone. And they found they weren't forgotten.

It was a totally volunteer effort which came together in just a few months to create the largest all-expense-paid gathering for the families of our fallen warriors since 9/11.

In 2007, another unique event was planned for the week after Thanksgiving. This time, over 1,100 children and surviving parents attended as guests of Americans, corporations, and service groups who donated their time, money and resources to create another healing event. Nearly 400 family members attended Snowball Express for the first time.

In 2008 a total of 1437 attendees came to the third annual event with over 900 children attending, many for the first time. Children who had attended previous events rekindled friendships with children met at previous years and new children attending for the first time were mentored by those who had been before. Emotional healing was occurring on many different levels.

American Airlines, Oakley, BP America, Quiksilver, Panda Express, Taco Bell, Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim Marriott, Sheraton Anaheim, Sheraton Park, Southwest Airlines, AirTran Airways, JetBlue Airways, Disneyland

and countless other partners and sponsors, combined with thousands of volunteers in Southern California and all across America, contributed and volunteered because it was the right thing to do. Nationally recognized organizations like Ladies Auxiliary VFW, Rotary Clubs, Vietnam Veterans of America, American Legion, Patriot Guard Riders and others stepped forward to donate their resources and gifts. Other local service clubs, churches and schools also donated resources to help the cause.

American Airlines stepped up to again to be the "Official Airline of Snowball Express", with six aircraft donated for charter purposes. All pilots and flight attendants donated their time to spend the weekend with the families. American Airline employees spent thousands of man hours donating their time to make these 5 days and these charters something for these children to always remember. Other companies from all across America are also helping to show these children and our fallen heroes' surviving spouses that they're not forgotten and that America cares.

In 2009, 1500 attendees came to Dallas, Texas for Snowball Express IV. The event was held in Dallas for the first time and once again American Airlines stepped up to the plate, this time providing eight charter flights for our families.

The families enjoyed a day at Southfork Ranch and an evening at the Mesquite Rodeo, an interactive day at the Dallas Convention Center capped off by a concert by Jeff Senour and the CTS Band. The final day was spent at the new Cowboy's Stadium in Arlington, Texas featuring a concert by Gary Sinese and his Lt. Dan Band.

We're already beginning to plan Snowball Express 2010.. Our plans call for another, even more memorable event in Dallas, Texas where we hope we will see more and more of our families.

Become a part of it.

If you're a corporation, become a sponsor.

If you're an organization, lend us your hearts to help mend those of the survivors in small towns and big cities all across America.

If you're an individual, we'll take your dollars. One or a thousand.

There are no votes in these efforts. No lobbying, no politics.

No Republicans. No Democrats. Only Americans.

These people died as Americans. Let's step up as Americans and help their families.

Dig deep. Please.

They deserve no less.

For information about Snowball Express, please contact us at [info@snowballexpress.org](mailto:info@snowballexpress.org).

## **Our Military Kids**

**Our Military Kids** provides substantial support in the form of grants to the children of National Guard and Military Reserve personnel who are currently deployed overseas, as well as the children of Wounded Warriors in all branches. The grants from **Our Military Kids** pay for participation in sports, fine arts, camps, and tutoring

programs that nurture and sustain children while a parent is away in service to our country or recovering from injury.

[www.militarykids.org](http://www.militarykids.org)

### **DCoE Releases New Children of Military Service Members Resource Guide**

Deployment not only affects our military service members individually, but also has a significant impact on their families, especially the children. From toddlers to teenagers, children may face difficult separations, strong emotions, and recognize changes in parent's behavior once the deployed family member returns. The guide was developed in support of The Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) mission to identify and promote effective instructional material for wounded warriors, families, and health care providers. Children of Military Service Members Resource Guide is an online resource to assist families and health care providers address the mental and emotional health needs of military children. The guide is available through AUSA's Family Programs Resource listings at: <http://www.ausea.org/family>. To read this article in full, please go to:

<http://www.dcoe.health.mil/Content/Navigation/Documents/DCoE%20Children%20of%20Military%20Service%20Members%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

### **VA to Rename Suicide Hotline**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will soon launch a new suicide prevention campaign entitled the "It's Your Call" campaign which revolves around the National Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255, press 1). This hotline will now be called the Veterans Crisis Line and will still be available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The Veterans Crisis Line has answered more than 390,000 calls and has made more than 13,000 life-saving rescues since its inception. For more information, visit the VA website at:

[http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/?rnd=02434819650295814365519](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/?rnd=02434819650295814365519)

### **Little-Known Benefit Can Give Veterans a Late-in-Life Boost**

A need-based, tax-free pension, Aid and Attendance (A&A) supports wartime veterans and their spouses who cannot pay for non-service-related medical needs. Veterans with service-connected disabilities are able to get compensation through a separate program operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). About 182,000 veterans and their spouses take advantage of the A&A benefit, which has been around since World War I, but VA officials say that many more are eligible. Beneficiaries must be at least 65 years old and be veterans or married to veterans who served during a wartime period. A&A applicants must mail the forms, copies of service records, marriage certificates, proof of insurance and medical records to the regional VA office. Prospective applicants can get information from veterans' organizations such as the American Legion or they can call the VA at 800.827.1000. To learn more, please go to the following link: <http://www.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/viewer.aspx>

### **Initiative Aims to Assist Military Families**

Military spouses and dependents are the inspiration behind an initiative launched Tuesday, 12 April by first Lady Michelle Obama. The mission of "Joining Forces," is to make more Americans aware of the challenges facing military families, and to highlight ways communities, organizations and businesses are helping these families. Nearly 50 specific commitments have been identified to improve the lives of military families, ranging from protecting families from financial scams to improving education for military kids and spouses, and increasing efforts to end homelessness. To view the initiatives or to read this article in full, please go to:

<http://www.armytimes.com/news/2011/04/military-michelle-obama-joining-forces-family-initiative-041211w/>

## **Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended Again**

The deadline for eligible Service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended once again to Oct. 21, 2011, allowing those who are eligible, more time to apply for the benefits they have earned under the program guidelines. The RSLSP was established to compensate for the hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss Authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status. For more information or to apply for RSLSP, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>

## **DoD Launches Sexual Assault Response Helpline**

Defense Department (DoD) officials launched the Pentagon's newest initiative to support victims of sexual assault. The DoD Safe Helpline allows Servicemembers to click, call or text for victim support services for themselves or others in cases of sexual assault. This helpline is free, anonymous and confidential, and those who reach out will connect with live sexual assault support professionals. This service is available live, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well. Safe Helpline offers three access options designed for Servicemembers. Users can go to <http://SafeHelpline.org> to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=63582>

## **Department Hosts Adventure Camps for Military Teens**

Now that government agencies have been directed by President Obama to identify better ways to serve military families, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Agriculture have joined together with 12 land grant universities to offer military teens an opportunity to go to a low-cost, high adventure camp at one of 50 locations. Four of these camps are also offering high-adventure opportunities to family members with special needs. These camps will provide military youth experiences such as a five-day kayaking trip through Washington's San Juan Islands, or a four-day adventure racing course in the Northeast, or also a one-week backpacking trip through Alaska's Denali Forest, which are not readily available through the traditional programs. Camps will open in late April. To check out the camp locations, please go to:

[https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure\\_camps/campsloc.html](https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure_camps/campsloc.html). For dates and times, please go to: [https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure\\_camps/campsdate.html](https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure_camps/campsdate.html). To register, please go to: [https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure\\_camps/campshome.html](https://www.extension.purdue.edu/Adventure_camps/campshome.html).

## **Fisher House Helps Service Members' Children**

Military children of Servicemembers who died or were seriously disabled in the line of duty may be eligible for a college education through the Heroes' Legacy scholarships provided by the Fisher House Foundation. These scholarships can be used by students to attend school in the fall and assist in covering tuition, books, lab fees and room and board to accredited U.S. post-secondary institutions of higher learning. The children eligible for this program must have a parent who died while on active duty following September 11, 2001, or became disabled while serving our country. To learn more about the qualifications of the Heroes' Legacy scholarship, please go to: <http://militaryscholar.org/index.html>. To read this article in its entirety, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=63499>.

## **DoD to Drop Social Security Numbers from ID Cards**

Currently, Social Security numbers are printed on the back of common access cards, and on the front of identification cards issued to dependents and retirees. Beginning 1 June, Social Security numbers on military identification cards will begin to disappear. The effort is part of a larger plan to protect Servicemembers and other

DoD identification card holders from identity theft. Social Security numbers embedded in the bar codes on the back of identification cards will remain there for now, but will be phased out beginning in 2012. The identity protection program began in 2008, when DoD started removing Social Security numbers from family member identification cards. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=63409>

### **Cell Phones for Soldiers**

Cell Phones for Soldiers hopes to turn old cell phones into millions of minutes of prepaid calling cards for U.S. troops stationed overseas. To do so, Cell Phones for Soldiers expects to collect 50,000 cell phones each month through a network of more than 3,000 collection sites across the country. The phones are sent to ReCellular, which pays Cell Phones for Soldiers for each donated phone – enough to provide an hour of talk time to soldiers abroad. Cell Phones for Soldiers was founded by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist from Norwell, Mass., in 2004 using \$21 of their own money. Since then, the registered 501c3 non-profit organization has raised almost \$2 million in donations and distributed more than 500,000 prepaid calling cards to soldiers serving overseas. To find out how to make a donation or learn more about the organization, please go to:

<http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/index.html>

### **M - Flood Grants for Minnesota Vets**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans' Affairs (MDVA) is offering flood relief grants for veterans in about half of Minnesota's 87 counties. Veterans, surviving spouses and families may be eligible for reimbursement assistance funds of up to \$750 if no other state or federal assistance was given for spring flooding. Applicants should have a copy of their expense receipts and should apply by 30 June. For more information, contact your local County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) or telephone LinkVET at 1-888-LinkVet (1-888-546-5838). For CVSO contact information, visit <http://www.minnesotaveteran.org>. LinkVet is a toll-free, one-stop customer service line for all Minnesota veterans and can also be found at: <https://linkvet.custhelp.com/>.

### **TRICARE Young Adult Rules Published**

The new TRICARE for Young Adults (ages 18-25) interim rules have been published in the Federal Register. Standard coverage is retroactively available from the first of the year with the DoD goal for enrollment as some time in May, with reimbursement available for documented medical costs. TRICARE Prime will become available Oct. 1. [TRICARE Young Adult Interim Rules](#)

### **ThanksUSA College Scholarships for Military Spouses and Children**

ThanksUSA is accepting applications from 1 April until May 15, 2011. Last year, 256 scholarships were awarded. [ThanksUSA Begins Sixth Year of College Scholarships for Military Spouses and Children](#). [www.ThanksUSA.org](http://www.ThanksUSA.org).

### **How to Nail a Job Interview**

The [Military Spouse Corporate Career Network](#) (MSCCN) provides free employment referral and job placement solutions to military spouses, veterans, war wounded and their caregivers. Sponsored by TriWest, MSCCN is hosting an online career training session, "How to Lock that Job - Interview Techniques that Work for You!" on April 27, and it's free for military spouses. [Register today!](#)

### **New Military Spouse Scholarship**

The ThanksUSA Scholarship Program for military spouses is accepting online applications as of April 1, 2011. New this year, Kaplan University is offering a full undergraduate scholarship and Educational Support Scholarships



which provides reduced tuition of up to 51 percent to eligible military spouses. Only on-line applications with all supporting documents will be accepted and evaluated. After submission, applicants will receive an electronic acknowledgement that their applications have been received. The on-line application period will end on May 15, 2011, at 11:59 p.m. Central Time. Visit ThanksUSA Scholarship Program webpage for application criteria and scholarship information at: <http://www.thanksusa.org/main/scholarships.html>.

### **DOD Launches Online Career Transition Training for Service members**

On 29 March, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced the launch of an online Career Decision Toolkit which allows Service members to self assess transition needs and carefully explore a variety of transition related subjects such as career searching and financial planning. The toolkit is customized to a Service member's own transition needs and assists them in categorizing and recording their military skills and experience to help them better communicate their skills to prospective employers. The online toolkit will provide a 24-hour global access to career transition training to Service members who are not geographically able to attend Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes traditionally offered at military installations. For more information on the online Career Decision Toolkit, visit <http://www.turbotap.org> or contact Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy at 703-428-7649 or <mailto:warriorcare@osd.mil>.

### **M - Month of the Military Child**

During the month of April, the State of Minnesota takes time to recognize the Month of the Military Child in order to emphasize the important role military children play while a parent or important adult is serving. Children of service members deal with many issues unique to their situation. Some move frequently, worry about a loved one in harm's way or just feel the stress of being separated from a parent for extended periods of time. All of these issues can make normal childhood activities, such as going to school, watching TV and playing with friends more difficult. It is estimated that over 15,000 children in Minnesota have been affected by a parent's deployment. During this month, Governor Mark Dayton will send military children a letter of gratitude in honor of their service and sacrifice. To register a military child to receive a letter from the Governor and for resources to support military children, visit: [www.mdva.state.mn.us/child](http://www.mdva.state.mn.us/child).

### **M - Beyond the Yellow Ribbon**

Minnesota Service Members and their families should know about our website. This is a one-stop shop for any military in Minnesota to obtain information. They can sign up to receive post card notification on jobs, military family discounts and events or resources available. Every military family member in MN should find this a great website to have in their favorite website folder!  
[www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org](http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org).

### **M - Trolling for Troops**

All Disabled Veterans and recently Deployed Soldiers who have served our country through the years deserve a day on the lake. Here is your opportunity to get a chance to fish with some of the best anglers in the Midwest! Anglers like the National Guard Professional Angling team, well known professional fishermen and others will guide Disabled Vets and recently Deployed MN National Guard Soldiers or Airmen for a day on a Brainerd area lake or Mississippi River! This will be a fun, exciting, day of fishing with a pro in boats that make heads turn. Door prizes will be awarded and trophies given out for the most successful teams! The event will be held June 2/3, 2011. Note: The deadline for applications is April 1, 2011. For this and other events, please see <http://calendar.mdva.state.mn.us>



## **VA Health Care Enrollment**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has implemented a number of outreach initiatives to help veterans enroll for health care. A veteran may apply for enrollment at any VA healthcare facility or veterans; benefits office at any time. There is no time limit. A form, "Application for Health Benefits, VA Form 10-10EZ, must be completed and can be submitted in person or by mail. For information on the VA's comprehensive health benefits, eligibility and enrollment, visit the VA's Health Care Overview webpage or call 1-877-222-8387 (VETS). To learn more about your state's veteran benefits, visit the Military.com State Veteran's Benefits Directory at <http://www.military.com>.

## **Concussions, Now, Warrant the Purple Heart**

The Purple Heart is one of the most sacred combat medals symbolizing bravery and sacrifice given only to those who get injured in combat. During the week of March 18th, the Army decided to broaden its guidelines on awarding the Purple Heart for battlefield concussions. Certain significant wounds are not visible such as mild traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and concussions, and these injuries have become so common that they are considered the 'signature injury' of the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars. The Army's review of Purple Heart guidelines shows that at least this branch of the military is trying to do right by all wounded soldiers. To read this article in its entirety, please go to: <http://www.latimes.com/health/fl-nbcol-purple-heart-brochu-0318-20110318,0,7442261.column>

## **Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended**

Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to April 8, 2011, allowing Servicemembers additional time to apply for the benefits which they've earned under the program guidelines. Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay was established to compensate for the hardships our military faced when they had to involuntarily extend their service under Stop Loss Authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status. For more information on RSLSP, including submission requirements and service-specific links, please go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

## **New Army Family Education Programs**

The Army recently unveiled two new programs for middle school and high school students. Project PASS (Partnership for All Student Success) is a program for high schools that feature Junior ROTC. Another program called the Junior Leadership Corps was introduced for seventh and eighth grade students. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan heralded the initiatives as potential life-changers for students in need of structure and motivation. For more information on Project PASS, please go to the following link:

[http://www.army.mil/media/amp/?bcpid=6981683001&bcpid=42804633001&bckey=AQ~~,AAAAAG\\_GHPw~,CI0n3-GqPXFAdNv94CEJynLDP7XRS7HF&bclid=6973228001&bctid=822873628001](http://www.army.mil/media/amp/?bcpid=6981683001&bcpid=42804633001&bckey=AQ~~,AAAAAG_GHPw~,CI0n3-GqPXFAdNv94CEJynLDP7XRS7HF&bclid=6973228001&bctid=822873628001). For more information on Army ROTC, visit the Go Army ROTC website at: <http://www.goarmy.com/rotc.html>, and the U.S. Army Cadet Command website at: <http://www.rotc.usaac.army.mil/>. To find complete information on current cash enlistment incentives (signing bonuses) and reenlistment bonuses offered by each of the Armed Forces, visit the <http://www.military.com> bonus center.

## **Veterans Tax Credit Ending**

The Veteran's Home Buyer Tax Credit program will soon end. Veterans who served overseas in the past two years are possibly eligible for an \$8,000 tax credit if they have purchased a home. However, last year, Congress passed an extension for veterans stating that though a contract must be signed by April 30, 2011, applicants have until June

30, 2011 to close the deal. All veterans should consult with a professional tax preparer regarding their eligibility. For more tips and information on taxes, visit: <http://www.military.com/Finance/Taxes/0,13397,82,00.html>

### **Teen Deployment Classes Available**

The Teen Deployment Class was developed to increase understanding of what to expect during a deployment. If teens have a parent, sibling, aunt or uncle or even a friend who is preparing for deployment, is currently deployed, or has returned home after deployment, this class is for them. Participants will learn tips to manage stress, understand how deployment may affect their family and about the programs available for military youth. For information about eligibility, location and to view the schedule and register, please go to:

<http://spousebuzz.com/blog/2008/10/teen-deployment.html>

### **Army Band Offers Free Music Lessons**

The United States Army Field Band recently incorporated instructional videos into their website via an "Educational Video Series Player." The free player is designed for all levels of musicians and music enthusiasts, presenting topics ranging from history and maintenance to advanced playing techniques. Users can select the topic that interests them most and go directly to the lesson. The player is easily launched from a PC or Mac and does not require the user to download any software. The videos are available on the Army Field Band website -- click on the "Educational Video Series Player" that will launch the instructional videos. <http://www.armyfieldband.com/>

### **Vet Legal Website:**

A website designed to be the nation's leading resource for the legal needs and rights of military families, <http://www.Statesidelegal.org>, is up and running thanks to the work of Maine's largest legal aid provider. Portland-based Pine Tree Legal Assistance was the lead agency in the creation of the site, which was officially launched in NOV 2010 during a conference at the White House. The site serves as an online hub for legal information -- including videos, self-help tools and other resources -- specifically for military personnel, veterans and their families. Topics addressed on the site range from foreclosure to disability benefits. Legal experts say many military families are not aware of their unique rights or how to access help for civil legal needs. Information is by legal problem, military status and state of residence. Through the end of January, the site had received about 60,000 page views and 10,000 unique visitors. Those visitors include people from all 50 states and 68 countries worldwide, including 14 visitors from Iraq. To build the site, Pine Tree received a \$300,000 grant from the Legal Services Corp. in Washington, D.C. Legal Services is a nonprofit corporation, created and funded by Congress, whose sole mission is to help poor Americans gain equal access to the civil justice system.

William Russo of the office of general counsel at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, believes it will help veterans improve the quality of their lives. "The content of the site is excellent and very useful for veterans and for VA employees," Russo said. "In particular it allows the VA employees who are assisting veterans to help them obtain legal services. In terms of legal assistance, I'm not aware of any comparable resource," he said. Robert Nelson, who was assistant secretary of the Army under President Carter, was among the volunteer advisers who helped develop the website. Nelson, a lawyer who is now retired, also was the first general counsel for Paralyzed Veterans of America. Nelson said, "We find that a lot of veterans don't know what their rights are. That's a problem," Nelson said. He hopes <http://www.Statesidelegal.org> will help as many veterans as possible. [Source: Portland Press Herald Trevor Maxwell article 22 Feb 2011 ++]

### **Employee Partnership of the Armed Forces -Website Links Unemployed Vets, Spouses to Jobs**

Unemployed veterans, wounded warriors, reserve-component service members and their spouses searching for jobs can find one-stop shopping at a Web portal designed just for them. Operated by the Army Reserve, the Employee Partnership of the Armed Forces provides assistance to those seeking employment and to those public and private employers who support our troops and are ready to hire former Servicemembers. Employers favor veterans

because they are often highly skilled leaders from the military atmosphere. To find more information on this website, please go to: <http://www.employerpartnership.org/> . To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=62751>

## **Military Benefits Blog**

Benefits are the reward for faithful service. This blog, like the companion book *The Military Advantage*, offers Servicemembers, veterans, and their families a comprehensive resource to help them learn about and take advantage of their military pay, travel, education, TRICARE, and VA benefits. Get the latest news and updates on your benefits by going to: <http://militaryadvantage.military.com/?ESRC=mr.nl>.

## **TRICARE News - Tricare Updates from TriWest Healthcare February 2011**

### **Health Matters**

The January 2011 issues of Health Matters, for both [Prime](#) and [Standard](#) beneficiaries, are now available for download! Did you miss an issue? Download a copy from our [archives](#).

### **TRICARE Dependent Coverage to Age 26**

Under the upcoming [TRICARE Young Adult program](#), TRICARE will cover eligible adult children up to age 26.

### **TRICARE Online**

Need to make an appointment? Refill a prescription? Interested in taking a health risk assessment? Do it all at [TRICAREOnline.com](#)

### **Help a Marine You Love... and Yourself**

Feeling stressed by the Marine Corps life? The DSTRESS Line was developed by the Corps to provide professional, anonymous counseling for Marines, their families and loved ones when it's needed most. Learn how you can [get help for yourself or your Marine](#).

### **TriWest News**

#### **Help Us Choose Where to Donate**

When you opt in for paperless communications now through March 31, 2011, [TriWest will donate \\$5](#) to your choice of military support organizations.

#### **Maximize that Tax Refund!**

Need help [itemizing your health care expenditures](#) for tax season? Register at [triwest.com](http://triwest.com) and pull up a year's worth of TRICARE costs online!

#### **Free Help, Around the Clock**

Service members and their families face extraordinary circumstances. To help you find your way through it all, [TriWest Online Care](#) offers free, confidential support online, anytime.

### **Healthy Living News**

#### **The One-Minute Read: Keep Yourself from Getting Sick**

What's the one thing that nine out of 10 healthy people can do to keep from getting sick? Find out in this month's [one-minute read!](#)

## Shut Down Whooping Cough

Highly contagious and especially dangerous to young children and elderly adults, whooping cough is still on the loose in the Western U.S. Are you [taking the right precautions](#) to stay safe?

## VA Opens Toll-Free Caregiver Support Line

Caregivers are the family members and loved ones who provide care for Veterans who are living with the effects of war, disability, chronic illness, or aging. They deserve VA's highest level of support. On February 1, 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) opened a toll-free National Caregiver Support Line housed at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center campus in Canandaigua, New York. The support line will serve as a primary resource/referral center to assist caregivers, veterans and others seeking caregiver information to help in the care of our Nation's Veterans. Calls to the National Caregiver Support Line will be answered by VA employees who are licensed clinical social workers. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://dcoe.health.mil/DCoeNews/VAOpensToll-FreeCaregiverSupportLine.aspx>. To learn more about the National Caregiver Support Line, please go to: <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>

## Tax Tips 2010 (Herbert Hayes) from MOAA

The following applies to income earned in tax year 2010:

- 1. Tax Forms** - To encourage electronic filing, the IRS is no longer mailing tax forms to most individuals. Forms can be downloaded at <http://www.irs.gov>, purchased from commercial sources (normally on CD), or picked up at some Federal locations such as the post office or IRS sites. Because of late-year revisions in the tax code, revised tax forms may not be available until February.
- 2. Tax Deadlines Extended** - The IRS announced that taxpayers have until 18 APR this year to file and pay any taxes due. Those taxpayers requiring an extension will have until 17 OCT to file their 2010 tax returns.
- 3. Delay to File** - The IRS said that they will not even process certain tax returns until mid-to-late FEB because Congress was late in its final tax legislation and the IRS requires the time to publish and deliver the changes to the tax forms. Those who need to wait include:
  - Those who itemize on Form 1040 Schedule A
  - Those who claim higher education tuition and fees
  - Those who claim the educator expense deduction

Except for those facing a delay, the IRS will accept e-file and Free File returns beginning 14 JAN.

**4. Requirement to File a Tax Return** - You must file a federal income tax return if your income is above a certain level; which varies depending on your filing status, age and the type of income you receive. Check the Individuals section of the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov> or consult the instructions for Form 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ for specific details that may help you determine if you need to file a tax return with the IRS this year. You can also use the Interactive Tax Assistant (ITA) available on the IRS website to determine if you need to file a tax return. The ITA tool is a tax law resource that takes you through a series of questions and provides you with responses to tax law questions. There are some instances when you may want to file a tax return even though you are not required to do so. Even if you don't have to file, here are seven reasons why you may want to:

- Federal Income Tax Withheld.* You should file to get money back if Federal Income Tax was withheld from your pay, you made estimated tax payments, or had a prior year overpayment applied to this year's tax.

*Making Work Pay Credit.* You may be able to take this credit if you had earned income from work. The maximum credit for a married couple filing a joint return is \$800 and \$400 for other taxpayers.

*Earned Income Tax Credit.* You may qualify for EITC if you worked, but did not earn a lot of money. EITC is a refundable tax credit; which means you could qualify for a tax refund.

*Additional Child Tax Credit* - This refundable credit may be available to you if you have at least one qualifying child and you did not get the full amount of the Child Tax Credit.

*American Opportunity Credit* - The maximum credit per student is \$2,500 and the first four years of postsecondary education qualify.

*First-Time Homebuyer Credit* - The credit is a maximum of \$8,000 or \$4,000 if your filing status is married filing separately. To qualify for the credit, taxpayers must have bought - or entered into a binding contract to buy - a principal residence located in the United States on or before 30 APR 10. If you entered into a binding contract by 30 APR 10, you must have closed on the home on or before 30 SEP 10. If you bought a home as your principle residence in 2010, you may be able to qualify and claim the credit even if you already owned a home. In this case, the maximum credit for long-time residents is \$6,500, or \$3,250 if your filing status is married filing separately.

*Health Coverage Tax Credit* - Certain individuals, who are receiving Trade Adjustment Assistance, Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance, or pension benefit payments from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, may be eligible for a Health Coverage Tax Credit worth 80 percent of monthly health insurance premiums when you file your 2010 tax return.

**5. Withholding** - Your employer withholds an amount based on your expected annual earnings as required by IRS Pub 15. Those withholdings are sent to the US Treasury and held in an account not unlike your mortgage escrow account for later distribution for payment of your taxes owed and return of any excess to you. You control much of the amount withheld by the use of your W-4 form filed with your employer. The IRS wants you to estimate the amount that will be owed and adjust your W-4 so that your "escrow" account has enough, but no excess next year at tax time.

**6. Mileage Rates** - The standard mileage rates for use of a car, van, pickup, or panel truck will be:

*Business* - 50 cents per mile

*Medical or Moving* - 16.5 cents per mile

*Service for Charitable Organizations* - 14 cents. Using a motorcycle is 48 cents per mile, while the rate for using a personal airplane is \$1.29 per mile.

**7. Taxpayer Advocacy.** The IRS has an office dedicated to taxpayer advocacy to assist when you have made every other effort to resolve your problems with the IRS. The Taxpayer Advocacy Service (TAS) will assist cases that have reached an impasse with IRS customer service representatives -- they are not there to take complaints about taxes. The IRS sponsors several outreach programs to assist the public via citizen volunteers. One most recognized is the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which helps folks prepare routine returns (mostly low income and basic returns), the Low Income Taxpayer Committee (LITC), and the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP). TAP solicits comments from the public as to how the IRS might improve its interface with the taxpayers (ex: clarify language on forms and pubs, change telephonic procedures, etc). The mission of TAP is "to listen to taxpayers, identify taxpayer issues, and makes recommendations to the IRS for improving IRS service and customer satisfaction." There is at least one citizen volunteer in each state who serves for three years on several TAP committees and subcommittees. TAP has counterparts in TAS and other IRS offices for directly communicating issues brought forward; and a report is prepared by TAS each year for Congressional presentation. Your comments about the tax code should be referred to your Congressional representative -- the IRS can only administer what your representatives have legislated.

**8. Documentation retention.** The Internal Revenue Code and Income Tax Regulations require that every person liable for any tax imposed by the Internal Revenue Code keep books and records available at all times for inspection by IRS. As all military know, the "school solution as to how long is 'it depends'." This is not a cop-out answer -- NORMALLY, the answer would be three years after filing a return; BUT there are many exceptions requiring nearly a lifetime or even generational requirements for documentation. For your own specific need, check IRS Pub <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p552/ar02.html>.

**9. Military Taxes.** There are many differences for military related expenses - moves, uniforms, combat exclusions, etc. Check IRS Pub 3.

*Moving Expenses* - If you are a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and you move because of a permanent change of station, you can deduct the reasonable un-reimbursed expenses of moving you and members of your household.



For officers, the monthly exclusion is capped at the highest enlisted pay plus any hostile fire or imminent danger pay received.

- *Extension of Deadlines* – The time for taking care of certain tax matters can be postponed. The deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes, filing claims for refund, and taking other actions with the IRS is automatically extended for qualifying members of the military.
- *Uniform Cost and Upkeep* – If military regulations prohibit you from wearing certain uniforms when off duty, you can deduct the cost and upkeep of those uniforms, with a reduction of expenses by any allowance or reimbursement you receive.
- *Joint Returns* – Generally, joint returns must be signed by both spouses. However, when one spouse may not be available due to military duty, a power of attorney may be used to file a joint return.
- *Travel to Reserve Duty* – If you are a member of the US Armed Forces Reserves, you can deduct unreimbursed travel expenses for traveling more than 100 miles away from home to perform your reserve duties.
- *ROTC Students Subsistence* - Allowances paid to ROTC students participating in advanced training are not taxable. However, active duty pay - such as pay received during summer advanced camp - is taxable.
- *Transitioning Back to Civilian Life* - You may be able to deduct some costs you incur while looking for a new job. Expenses may include travel, resume preparation fees, and outplacement agency fees.
- *Tax Help* - Most military installations offer free tax filing and preparation assistance during the filing season.
- *Tax Information* - IRS Publication 3, Armed Forces' Tax Guide, summarizes many important military-related tax topics. Publication 3 can be downloaded from <http://www.irs.gov/> or may be ordered by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (829-3676).

## **Military Benefits Blog**

Benefits are the reward for faithful service. This blog, like the companion book *The Military Advantage*, offers Servicemembers, veterans, and their families a comprehensive resource to help them learn about and take advantage of their military pay, travel, education, TRICARE, and VA benefits. Get the latest news and updates on your benefits. For further information on *The Military Advantage*, and for the latest news and updates on your benefits, please go to: <http://www.usni.org/store/books/general-reference/military-advantage-2010-edition>.



## **Employer Partnership Office - Career Opportunities**

Get Hired through The Employer Partnership Office. We invite you to search through our employment search engine by linking on the link below. Start your job search now!!!

## **Training Opportunities for Your Dream Job!**

Another way to get a job is to get trained! The Employer Partnership offers Training Programs through their Employer Partners. Please read the details below for more information.

To view a list of training programs [Click HERE](#).

## **HOT JOBS!**

To browse through our employer partners' list of immediate openings please [Click HERE](#).

New website:

[www.employerpartnership.org](http://www.employerpartnership.org)

### **VA web site for veterans for enrollment and health benefits**

<https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>

### **TRICARE Young Adult Program Announced**

The Department of Defense announced its introduction of the premium-based TRICARE Young Adult Program (TYAP) which extends medical coverage to eligible military family members to the age of 26. TYAP implements the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of fiscal 2011. Premium costs for TYAP are not yet finalized, but the NDAA specifies rates must cover the full cost of the program. Beginning later this spring, qualified, unmarried dependents up to age 26 will be able to purchase TRICARE coverage on a month-to-month basis. To read this article in full or for more information on TYAP, please go to:

<http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=14200> or <http://www.tricare.mil/>

### **Military OneSource Tax Assistance**

The Military OneSource Tax Program has begun! The program provides free access to a customized version of the basic H&R Block at Home electronic tax-filing product which allows for free federal filing and free state filing (up to three states). In addition, free telephonic tax consultations are available to help with tax related issues. To learn more about the program and filing your 2010 taxes, please go to: <http://www.militaryonesource.com>.

### **Fort Family**

Have you ever heard of Fort Family?

If not, then your TPUs probably haven't either. I didn't until yesterday.

I am asking you to send this information to ALL your TPUs and you associates.

AER does nothing for them if they are having problems, as I found out.

AER is for active or mobed Soldiers only.

The following will give them the resources to go to that they need, if they have a problem with rent, mortgage, heat, food, vehicle repairs, etc.

Fort Family (formally Family support services): 24/7 available

1-866-345-8248. They are the Reserve version of AER based out of Atlanta.

<http://www.myarmyonesource.com/default.aspx>

<https://www.myarmyonesource.com/familyprogramsandservices/armyreservefamilyprograms/default.aspx>

<http://www.arfp.org/skins/ARFP/home.aspx?mode=user>

### **Vietnam Wall**

First click on a state. When it opens, scroll down to the city and the names will appear. Then click on their names. It should show you a picture of the person, or at least their bio and medals. This really is an amazing web site. Someone spent a lot of time and effort to create it. I hope that everyone who receives this appreciates what those who served in Vietnam sacrificed for our country. The link below is a virtual wall of all those lost during the Vietnam war with the names, bio's and other information on our lost heroes. Those who remember that time frame, or perhaps lost friends or family can look them up on this site. Pass the link on to others, as many knew wonderful people whose names are listed.  
<http://www.virtualwall.org/iStates.htm>

### **Hero Miles Program Supports Families of Fallen, Wounded**

A popular program that turns donated frequent-flyer miles into free airline tickets for wounded warriors receiving medical care as well as their families will expand this year so families of the fallen and combat wounded can participate in two upcoming events. The Fisher House Foundation, which administers the "Hero Miles" program, plans to offer airline tickets so grieving families needing assistance can fly to Washington, D.C., this Memorial Day weekend to participate in the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors seminar. The program provides free round-trip airline tickets to two categories of passengers. Servicemembers on at least five days of approved leave from their medical center who do not qualify for government-funded airfare can receive tickets home and back. In addition, qualified Servicemembers may receive tickets to enable their family or close friends to visit them while they're treated at the medical center. To date, the program has provided more than 21,000 airline tickets valued at more than \$27 million to combat veterans of operation in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families. For further information, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=62333>



### **M – Minnesota Military Radio Hour**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Minnesota National Guard are pleased to announce the Minnesota Military Radio Hour. The weekly hour-long military and Veterans public affairs pro-gram airs Sundays at 7 a.m. on KTLK 100.3 FM. The show is upbeat, patriotic, respectful, informative and entertaining. Host Tom Lyons will talk with guests about Veterans issues, military issues, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program and more. For more information visit [www.minnesotamilitaryradiohour.com](http://www.minnesotamilitaryradiohour.com) or follow the show on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour](http://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaMilitaryRadioHour)



**M** - We are proud to announce our 1st annual Holes For Heroes Ice Fishing Tournament to be held Saturday, February 5th from 12:00 pm-3:00 pm on Medicine Lake in Plymouth. Just like we did for our open water

tournament, we will be simulcasting this event overseas so that active members deployed there can watch their friends and families fish back here. There is no charge for military family members.

The event will feature prizes for most fish, first fish, largest fish and smallest fish of multiple species, most fish caught in timed trials, door prizes and random drawings for gifts from sponsors. We will also have an education zone available for anyone who has never ice fished teaching people jigging techniques, underwater visualization, and tip-up riggings.

The event is open to the public for the nominal fee of \$5, or a family of four for \$18. Come on out and have fun while thanking our military and their families for the service and sacrifice they provide.

<http://www.fishingforlife.org/fishingforlife/holes-for-heroes/>

For registration assistance, please contact [brenda@fishingforlife.org](mailto:brenda@fishingforlife.org).

For all other questions, please contact Fishing For Life at [info@fishingforlife.org](mailto:info@fishingforlife.org).



eBenefits is your one-stop shop for online benefits-related tools and information. This portal is designed for Wounded Warriors, Veterans, Service Members, their families, and their caregivers. We invite you to explore eBenefits and become a registered user. Veterans Benefits Administration provides financial and other forms of assistance to veterans and their dependents.

[Disability Compensation](#)

[Survivors' Benefits](#)

[Benefit Fact Sheets](#)

[Education Benefits \(G.I. Bill\)](#)

[Compensation and Pension](#)

[Forms](#)

[Compensation Rate Information](#)

[VA Begins Paying Benefits for New ...](#)

**A Gift to Honor Military Families**



Military families demonstrate exceptional resilience and courage when Servicemembers are deployed and provide invaluable support and encouragement. They are recognized as a critical part of the Department of Defense mission for their commitment, dedication, sacrifices, and the work they do behind the scenes. Their unselfish contributions to the military community enable our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines to focus on their mission.

The ornament features a military family and service flag raised on a 3" gold star with blue cutout border and hanging ribbon. Beautiful gift box and description included. \$20 ea +\$ 3 S&H.

Payable to Walter Reed Society, PO Box 59611, Walter Reed Station, Washington DC 20012-9611 (202) 782-6607.

Proceeds are used to assist Soldiers and their families who have special needs during their treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and to support the other purposes of the Society. [walterreedsociety@verizon.net](mailto:walterreedsociety@verizon.net)

### **Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended Once Again**

The deadline for eligible Servicemembers, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has now been extended to March 4, 2011, allowing personnel more time to apply for the benefits they've earned under these program guidelines. The deadline extension is included in the continuing resolution signed by President Obama providing funding for federal government operations through March 4, 2011. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/utility/printitem.asp?print=http://www.defense.gov/releases>

### **Vets Launch Clothing Line for Wounded Warriors**

Jason Redman remembers what it was like to go out in public while recovering from war wounds. Having to wear a ripped or cut T-shirt to fit over his "halo", metal rods affixed directly to his skull, made it impossible to wear normal clothing. As winter set in, Redman said that he felt completely uncomfortable walking around in a slit or cut T-shirt. These experiences motivated Redman to start up a nonprofit organization called Wounded Wear. Redman was a Lieutenant with the Navy SEALs and created this organization about 18 months ago. Earlier this

month, Wounded Wear achieved its first major milestone: Redman and several supporters spent two days at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and at the Navy hospital in Bethesda, visiting wounded troops and handing out clothes, along with promises or free tailoring. Working alongside a foundation formed by another SEAL, Marcus Luttrell, Wounded Wear distributed about 150 sets of clothing, each worth about \$400. For further information, please go to: [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/12/ap\\_wounded-warrior-clothing-line-122410/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/12/ap_wounded-warrior-clothing-line-122410/)

### **TRICARE Benefit Enhancements Continued in 2011**

It was a landmark year for health care in the United States. The past year was a busy one for TRICARE with expanding coverage to new beneficiary populations, achieving milestones in health information technology and extending innovative programs in 2010. The passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in March brought new or expanded health care options and consumer protections for those with private health insurance coverage. Current legislation approved by Congress and awaiting the President's signature would extend TRICARE's dependent medical coverage up to age 26. To sign up for TRICARE Young Adult updates, please go to: <http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions>. To read this article in full, please click on the following link: [http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news\\_print.aspx?fid=680](http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news_print.aspx?fid=680).

### **The Giving Effect**

The Giving Effect is a website designed to help donors connect with charities in the most convenient possible way and also organize those charities according to their needs. The website is free for charities and allows them to offer and request items, broadcast messages to their supporters and promote themselves in their community and nationwide. Charities can be locally oriented or part of a national movement. The website has causes listed by needs and types such as animals, environmental, military, etc. under the Explore tab on the front page. For more information, visit The Giving Effect website at: <http://thegivingeffect.com/>

### **Operation R&R**

Operation R&R is a non-profit organization designed to provide Servicemembers an opportunity to reconnect with their spouses and children upon their return from Iraq or Afghanistan. Property owners, represented by many property management companies, are donating their homes and villas on Hilton Head Island, SC for this purpose. This is all to ensure that our military families have a chance to spend some time away from their everyday lives to strengthen relationships that have been strained due to long separations and extreme circumstances. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.operationrestandrelax.org/>



A new recruitment site for the Army now serves as the employment portal for Army positions worldwide. Army Civilian Service baby boomers will be retiring en masse over the next 10 years. To attract the "best and brightest" next generation workforce, a focused enterprise-wide recruitment strategy required the development of a dot com website to promote the Army as an employer of choice. The [Army Civilian Service website](#) establishes an Army civilian web presence to increase prospective employees understanding of and motivation to join the Army civilian team. The United States Army has employed civilians since 1776 to support men and women in uniform. Today,



with more than 330,000 civilian employees, Army Civilian Service is the largest, busiest and most successful “company” within the Department of Defense.

Army civilians are dedicated, experienced and committed to serving the Nation. We are an integral part of the Army team providing mission-essential support to the Soldier. We are federal civil servants and we are committed to selfless service in the performance of our duties in support of our nation.

To learn more about careers within Army Civilian Service, the quality of life you can expect, professional development and where in the world you might like to work check-out [Our Locations](#).

Real opportunities. Important work. Army Civilian Service. Join us.

<http://www.armycivilianservice.com/>

### **M -After Deployment Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT)**

ADAPT is a parenting program specifically for military families. It is founded on the evidence-based Parent Management Training program in Oregon (PMTO) developed by Dr. Marion Gorgatch. Members at the University of Minnesota, Minnesota National Guard, Minnesota VA Medical Center and Oregon Social Learning Center have adapted PMTO to create ADAPT, a curriculum to specifically meet the needs of military families, particularly where the deployed parent was in combat. ADAPT is made available through the Veteran’s Medical Center in association with Ambit Network, University of Minnesota.

- Who can benefit? Families interested in understanding their parenting strengths and regaining ground. Families wanting to reduce daily “battles” with their children and wanting strategies for improving children’s behaviors, stress and loss. Families coping with transitions, stress and loss.
- How does ADAPT work? It provides a mixture of education and support in a group based format for parents. Adapt is a safe, friendly and fun environment for military families. Group sessions go for 14 weeks and meet once per week for 1.5 hours - light snacks and incentives provided. Participants can contribute to the evaluation of the program by completing questionnaires before and after the sessions. Participation is voluntary and compensation is provided.
- How do I enroll? Contact Meaghan Nelson, Project Coordinator at 612-787-6895. More information is available at [www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org/images/stories/ADAPT\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org/images/stories/ADAPT_brochure.pdf).

### **24/7 Outreach Center - 866-966-1020**

- Features: Trained professional health resource consultants with expertise in psychological health and traumatic brain injury - Available 24/7 - Information provided by phone, online chat or e-mail - Free!
- Provides: A trusted source of information on psychological health and traumatic brain injury issues and resources. Responses to specific questions and needs (not advice). If they can’t answer your question and need, they will connect you to someone that can.- Serves: Everyone! [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org)

### **Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended**

The deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to March 4, 2011, allowing personnel more time to apply for the benefits they've earned under the program guidelines. The deadline extension is included in the continuing resolution signed by President Obama today, providing funding for federal government operations through March 4, 2011. "There was a surge of applicants as we approached our earlier deadline, but there may still be more out there who have yet to apply," said Lernes Hebert, director, Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management. "We are pleased that this extension was included in the continuing resolution which will give those remaining the opportunity to apply as we continue to work through the current applications." The RSLSP was established to compensate for the

hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss Authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status. When RSLSP began on Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible for this benefit. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts over the past 14 months. Outreach efforts including direct mail, engaging military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets, will continue through March 4, 2011. To apply for more information, or to gather more information on RSLSP, including submission requirements and service-specific links, go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss.###>

### **myPay 2010 Tax Documents Schedule**

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has announced that personnel with *myPay* access will be able to obtain some of their tax statements online (not all available online) on the day they are posted using the secure website [mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx](http://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx). Forms listed below are available on the dates shown:

Retiree 1099R forms - 14 DEC  
Reserve Air Force, Army, Navy W-2 forms - 4 JAN  
Civilian employee W-2 forms - 6 JAN  
Army Non-appropriated Fund Civilian Pay W-2 - 11 JAN  
Marine Corps Active & Reserve W-2 forms - 18 JAN  
Savings Deposit Program 1099INT - 21 JAN  
Active Duty Air Force, Army, Navy - 24 JAN  
Vendor Pay MISC W-2, Travel PCS W-2 - 31 JAN

### **New VA Web Portal**

The VA has a new Web portal [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) that can help veterans and service members and their caregivers access online tools to help apply for benefits, download a DD Form 214, check benefit status, and more.

### **AAFES Offers 'For the Troops IV' CD**

Grammy Award-nominated musician John Ondrasik and 13 other artists are thanking military members for their service by contributing their talents and creating a CD entitled "For the Troops IV." This CD is available for free download to active duty Servicemembers, veterans and their families worldwide with a valid military ID at the AAFES Exchange website. An additional 200,000 hard copies of the CD will be sent to military bases, USO centers and other locations courtesy of TriWest Healthcare Alliance and Operation Homefront. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.aafes.com>

### **Walt Disney World Discount for Military**

From 1 JAN through 28 SEP 2011, Walt Disney World and Disneyland Resorts are offering special priced tickets and rooms to active and retired military members or spouses. There are several restrictions including black-out dates. An example is: At Walt Disney World Resort, eligible military personnel can purchase 4-day military promotional tickets with park hopper option for \$138 each, plus tax. Information can be obtained from participating military base ticket offices or the phone numbers below or [disneymilitarysales.com](http://disneymilitarysales.com).

For Walt Disney World Resort information, call 1-407-939-7830 and for Disneyland Resorts, call 1-714-956-6424

### **Military Veterans Fellowships**

This is my first Chairman's Message with regard to the Military Veterans Fellowships that the Admiral Carey Foundation has now supported and helped fund over the past four years. I am exceptionally pleased with the success and accomplishments of this fine program whose focus is to train and educate and credential U. S. Military

Veterans [MilVets] transitioning from military duty to civilian life so they can qualify for and establish a life's career path rather than "just a job". And thus far, we have been superbly successful in this effort, with MilVet Graduates now employed as Military Legislative Assistants on the Staffs of U. S. Senator's John Ensign of Nevada and Scott Brown of Massachusetts, on the Personal Security Detail of the U. S. Secretary of Transportation, and as a Special Agent of the F. B. I.! Not all bad for a program only 4 years old. For Full details on our MilVets Graduates, just [CLICK HERE](#) And to apply for this tremendous program, go to [www.WashingtonScholars.org](http://www.WashingtonScholars.org) and put "MilVets Program" at the top of your application. Special Thanks to all who are supporting the Admiral Carey Foundation, The Aurora Foundation, the Good Samaritans Foundation, the National Defense Committee, and the Washington Scholars Program in this outstanding and patriotic effort to give America's Military Veterans the BEST POSSIBLE CHANCE to succeed in their post active duty life and career. We owe them much, and with this program, we are fulfilling that obligation to provide them with a brighter future and a meaningful life's career in Service to America. With all good wishes,  
Rear Admiral [Ret.] Jim Carey, National Chairman  
The Admiral Carey Foundation  
[www.AdmiralCareyFoundation.org](http://www.AdmiralCareyFoundation.org)

### **Fitness Tool for Army Families**

Army Family members can now use the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness global assessment tool and all its online self-improvement modules without having a sponsored Army Knowledge Online account. Family members can now get their own, unique ID, user name and password directly with the Soldier Fitness Tracker. All they need to do is give their social security numbers once. Participants are verified through the Defense Enrollment Eligibility System. To learn more, please go to; <https://www.sft.army.mil/>

### **M - MACV - Collecting Flash drives for Veterans**

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) and IT4U, a local computer services firm, are raising funds to provide flash drives to underserved and homeless Veterans.

"Many of our Veteran clients do not own computers and must use the technology available at libraries and other public places," said Kathleen Vitalis, executive director for MACV.

"Providing flash drives for Veterans enables them to carry their personal digital information with them."

IT4U will be collecting donations - monetary or new unopened flash drives - through Jan. 30, 2011. All donations will be distributed at Minnesota StandDowns in the spring of 2011. For more information, visit [www.it4userservices.com](http://www.it4userservices.com).

### **Recognize the Signs of TBI**

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) recently launched three public service announcements to encourage Servicemembers to get a medical check-up quickly if they have suffered a blow or jolt to the head which could lead to a concussion, also known as mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI). The following are symptoms often associated with someone who has sustained a concussion: (1) trouble sleeping, (2) irritability, (3) memory problems, (4) blurred vision, and (5) headaches. For more information, visit the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center and the Real Warriors Campaign website at: <http://realwarriors.net/aboutus>

### **Job Corps**

Job Corps has partnered with the Veterans Employment & Training Service (VETS) to offer Veterans between the ages of 16 and 24 free training and support to transition into a career.

Veterans attend a training session in the career area of their choice. Among others, training areas include: construction, finance and business, homeland security and information technology.

Veterans are encouraged to attend one of the 123 Job Corps centers around the nation in order to take advantage of this program. After training, Job Corps offers graduates job placement assistance along with other support services. To learn more or to enroll call (800) 733-JOBS or visit: [www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov](http://www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov).

### **The Wounded Warrior Program**

The Wounded Warrior Program was established to create fellowships that provide employment opportunities within the House of Representatives. The fellowships will provide veterans with experience and exposure to ultimately broaden their scope of transition opportunities. Positions are available in Congressional Member district offices nationwide. Wherever possible, those selected for the program will be given the opportunity to transition into full-time employment. However, full-time employment is not guaranteed at the conclusion of the two-year fellowship. Applicants must have served on active duty since September 11, 2001, have a 30 percent or greater service-connected disability rating and less than 20 years of service. If a fellowship is located within a Member's district, the appointment is contingent on the Representative's continuous representation of that district. In addition to a current resumé, applicants must submit a copy of their DD214 and a VA letter confirming that they have at least a 30% service-connected disability rating.

<http://www.cao.house.gov/wwp-about.shtml>

### **National Veterans Small Business Conference**

Thousands of small business owners, veterans, military personnel and federal employees will attend the seventh annual National Veterans Small Business Conference and Exposition for veteran-owned small business in New Orleans Aug. 15-18, 2011. The event provides veteran business owners with important information about federal veterans programs, business development strategies, and Veteran-Owned Small Business and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) legislation. VA invites all interested persons and businesses to attend. For more information, visit VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization webpage:

<http://www.nationalveteransconference.com/> and check back frequently for new details.

### **Disney Tickets Military Discount**

Disney is making visiting Walt Disney World and Disneyland even more affordable. Their popular military discount program has been reinstated so that military families can continue to enjoy the parks at reduced prices. The discounted tickets are available for purchase by the military member or the spouse. In addition to the ticket for the military member, five additional tickets at the discounted rates can be purchased for family members or friends. The military member or spouse must use one of the six tickets, as a valid military identification card must be shown. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.militaryspot.com/site/print/2957/>. For more information regarding the 2011 Military Salute Special Ticket Offer, visit: <http://www.disneymilitarysales.com>

### **New Video Doctor Program Makes House Calls**

Military Pathways is pleased to announce the launch of Video Doctor, an anonymous, web-based program that gives Servicemembers and their families the opportunity to consult with a video doctor from their computer about issues related to depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Before accessing Video Doctor, individuals are asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire assessing their risk for depression, PTSD and other related disorders. After completing the self-assessment, individuals receive immediate results. To access the Video Doctor program, visit: <http://www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org> and take a self-assessment for depression or PTSD. The program will appear after the screening with your results. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.pnewswire.com/news-releases/new-video-doctor-program-makes-house-calls-107224208.html>

## Portal Helps Vets, Reserves, Guardsmen Land Jobs

A new, state-of-the-art Web portal has been developed to help veterans – as well as reserve-component members, their families and Wounded Warriors – land jobs with civilian employers who value their military experience. A resume builder helps users create a resume and maintain it in the system. Additionally, the new portal will be easier for about 1,200 employers participating in the partnership program. They will now be able to enter position vacancies directly into the system and track applications. In addition, they will be able to tap into resumes already in the system and reach out directly to candidates who qualify for their positions. To learn more concerning this Web portal, go to: <https://smms.army.pentagon.mil/EPO/> to read this article in full, go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=61639>

## Army Launches New Website for Wounded Warriors

The Army Warrior Transition Command launched a new website covering issues identified in feedback from wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and veterans. The new site, <http://www.WTC.army.mil>, was designed to be a comprehensive source of information on Army warrior care for more than 16,000 wounded, ill and injured soldiers and veterans.

## Snow Care for Troops

Project EverGreen has partnered with The BOSS Snowplow to connect military families with snow and ice management professionals and volunteers to provide free snow and ice removal services. If you are interested in helping a family in your area, please take a moment to complete our online application. Learn more at: <http://projectevergreen.com/scft/> and <http://www.bossplow.com/partners/snowcarefortroops>

**M - [Wreaths Across America](#)** invite you to

### *Fort Snelling National Cemetery*

Main Flag Pole Area

Saturday 11 December 2011 @ 11AM

**The [Wreaths Across America](#)** story began over 18 years ago when Worcester Wreath Company (a for-profit commercial business from Harrington, Maine) began a tradition of placing wreaths on the headstones of our Nation's fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery during the holidays.

Over that period of time, Worcester Wreath has donated 90,000 wreaths which were placed by volunteers in a wreath-laying ceremony each December. But as word spread, the mission to Remember; Honor; and Teach about the sacrifices made by our veterans has captured the hearts and minds of many communities across the Country.

In December 2007, 286 participating locations hosted Wreaths Across America ceremonies overseeing the placement of 32,553 wreaths on the headstones of those who served and sacrificed for our freedoms. In 2008 that number exceeded 350 locations and 100,000 wreaths placed in honor!

Minnesota Wing Civil Air Patrol invites you to join us in 2010 at any of the wreath-laying ceremonies to be held concurrently on **Saturday, December 11th, 2010 at 1100 hours local time**. A ceremony will be conducted at Fort Snelling National Cemetery at the Main Flagpole area and consists of a moment of silence, followed by a brief address and placement of wreaths at each military service branch monument flagpole. Following this we will move to Section A3, -5 and -6 to decorate gravestones in this area

Please join us for this memorable ceremony and dedication to honor our Minnesota Veterans here in the Twin Cities.

Last December over 900 wreaths were placed in Section 9A to remember those resting in honored glory.

Should you desire to sponsor a wreath for placement at Fort Snelling National Cemetery, or fund raise, please see the contact information below.

Thank you most kindly,

Richard Geis, Capt, CAP

Project Officer, MN WG

651-636-9724



### **Fort Family**

For a Family in crisis, the Army Reserve Family Programs stands ready to help! Fort Family is an repository of help through the web or by phone.

The Fort Family eMail is [help@fortfamily.org](mailto:help@fortfamily.org) and the toll free number is **1(866)345-8248**.

Fort Family is a Pilot program that is a part of the Army Reserve Virtual Installation mission and is intended to serve diverse, geographically dispersed Families. Our Fort Family Outreach staff uses cutting-edge technology as well as live, personal contact with highly skilled subject matter experts to serve our Soldiers and Families in crisis.

The following will give them the resources to go to that they need, if they have a problem with rent, mortgage, heat, food, vehicle repairs, etc.

Fort Family (formally Family support services): 24/7 available  
1-866-345-8248. They are the Reserve version of AER based out of Atlanta.

<http://www.myarmyonesource.com/default.aspx>

<https://www.myarmyonesource.com/familyprogramsandservices/armyreservefamilyprograms/default.aspx>

<http://www.arfp.org/skins/ARFP/home.aspx?mode=user>

### **VETS / Job Corps Training**

Executive Summary: DOL VETS needs your assistance to enroll 300 Veterans ages 20-24 in new one-year, all-expense paid Demonstration Project with ETA's Job Corp that provides training, a credential or certificate, stipend, housing, meals, employment and post-employment support!

Dear Partners in Veterans' Employment,

As the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, it gives me great pleasure to announce an exciting new training and employment opportunity for Veterans who are 20 to 24 years old!

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service and the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Job Corps are partnering in a demonstration project that will provide Job Corps' comprehensive array of career development services to eligible Veterans 20 to 24 years old to prepare them for successful careers.



This is a fully-funded, all-expense-paid demonstration project that is free for the Veterans. The program includes transportation to and from the Job Corps center, housing, meals, basic medical services, academic and career technical training, bi-weekly living allowance, and job placement and post-graduation support.

We have worked with Job Corps to create an accelerated, customized program developed specifically for Veterans. This program recognizes the maturity and life experience that our Veterans have gained from their military experience.

Job Corps employs a holistic career development training approach that teaches academic, vocational, employability skills and social competencies in an integrated manner through a combination of classroom, practical and based learning experiences to prepare participants for stable, long-term, and high-paying jobs. One of the important outcomes is that participants will obtain a credential or certificate certifying them in a trade.

Veterans accepted in the demonstration project will be living among non-Veterans and other Veterans who are also transitioning from the military to civilian life. One of the Job Corps program's key benefits is its post-graduate support. When Veterans are ready to begin transitioning into their career, Job Corps staff will assist them in job searching, resume drafting, and job interviewing skills.

Job Corps will provide graduates with transition services for up to 21 months after graduation, including assistance with housing, transportation and other support services. Upon completion of training, Veterans will be assigned to a career transition counselor to assist them with job placement or enrollment in higher education.

1. Atterbury Job Corps Center in Edinburgh, Indiana;
2. Earle C. Clements Job Corps Center in Morganfield, Kentucky; and
3. Excelsior Springs Job Corps Center in Excelsior Springs, Missouri.

The enrollment will be open and continuous until a center reaches 100 Veterans. It is expected that Veteran participants will be enrolling and graduating at various rates. Although Job Corps has set aside 300 slots for the demonstration project, actual participation during the year may exceed that number due to the continuous enrollment.

We will be announcing this demonstration project and providing handouts and other information in our TAP Employment Workshops all over the world. TAP facilitators will discuss this initiative in class and Job Corps personnel will visit selected sites to answer questions and initiate applications for interested Veterans. Once a participant has been identified and accepted into the program, he/she will be given the opportunity to select one of the three Job Corps training centers chosen by Job Corps for this demonstration project.

**This is a one-year demonstration program and we want to demonstrate demand for the program and its effectiveness as quickly as possible so that we can look at expanding it.**

**To make this demonstration project a success, we need your assistance in getting the word out.**

**Attached are three brochures that provide all the pertinent details and contact information.**

1. [Brochures](#) (PDF)
2. [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF)
3. [General Information](#) (PDF)

Here is the contact info to sign-up for the demonstration project:

(800) 733 - JOBS / 5627

[www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov](http://www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov)

VETS' point of contact in our National Office is Tim Winter at phone number, 202 693-4705 or email:

[winter.timothy@dol.gov](mailto:winter.timothy@dol.gov).

This is a great opportunity for our young Veterans and we all need to help them take advantage of it.

Sincerely,  
Ray Jefferson  
Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training  
Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
U.S. Department of Labor

### **Army Reserve Ambassador web site**

The objectives and responsibilities for the Army Reserve Program and an Ambassador list by state

<http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/community/Ambassadors>

### **Wish For Our Heroes**

The 501 (c)(3) organization grants wishes for our active-duty military members who have given SO much for the cause of freedom around the world! I know the sacrifice, as I proudly served with many of these men and women for 20+ years.

Please visit our website [www.wish4ourheroes.org](http://www.wish4ourheroes.org), and see how you or your business can give back to our service members. You can submit a wish for any active duty military member, or better yet, grant a wish. Every dollar donated goes directly to the granting of that wish. We have partnered with organizations and businesses who donate through payroll deductions, in-kind donations, and lump-sum contributions, and we hope you will join the list of these reputable organizations. [www.wish4ourheroes.org](http://www.wish4ourheroes.org)

Ron Leonard  
US Army Retired  
Served In All Iraq and Afghan Conflicts  
Wish For Our Heroes

### **Congress Approves Stop-Loss Pay Extension**

Congress is giving Servicemembers and veterans a little more time — until Dec. 3 — to apply for the extra pay that is owed them if their active service was involuntarily extended between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2008. The extension is included in the temporary appropriations bill, HR 3081, approved by Congress on Sept. 29. The stop-loss allowance is a \$500 payment for every month in which a person was under orders to remain on active duty beyond their separation or retirement date. Retroactive payments covering the period of Sept. 11, 2001, through Sept. 30, 2008, were authorized by Congress last year, with a one-year eligibility period that was set to expire on Oct. 21. But only about 59,000 of the 145,000 people the Department of Defense (DoD) believes are due money have had their payments approved. Click here, to read more: <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/09/military-stop-loss-deadline-extension-093010w/>

### **B&Bs Offering Free Stay for Veterans Day**

A West Virginia innkeeper who started letting military families stay free for Veterans Day in 2008 has recruited 400 inns across the U.S. and Canada as part of an initiative to offer free rooms this fall. Nearly 400 independently owned inns, including five in Canada, have signed on to offer free rooms Nov. 10, the night before Veterans Day for Vets. Most of the establishments are small; The average size of a bed-and-breakfast in the U.S. is five or six rooms, according to an industry group. Some participants can spare just a single room. A valid military or Veterans Administration ID is required for each reservation To find participating B&B's, go to: <http://www.bnbsforvets.org/participants.html>

**M - Flood Relief Grants Available for Veterans and Families** SAINT PAUL, Minn. - As a result of severe flooding in parts of the state, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is offering Flood Relief Grants for reimbursable expenses to Veterans in approximately 35 Minnesota counties. Affected counties include Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Dakota, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Ramsey, Rice, Rock, Scott, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona and Yellow Medicine. The most severe damage is focused on Blue Earth, Goodhue, Martin, Olmsted, Rice, Steele and Wabasha counties. Veterans, their families and surviving spouses may be eligible for reimbursement assistance funds of up to \$750 if they have not received FEMA or other assistance. Veterans and their families should contact their local County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) for more information on this program or to request a Flood Relief Grant. For CVSO contact information, visit [www.minnesotaveteran.org](http://www.minnesotaveteran.org) or call 1-888-LINKVET (546-5838). All eligible applications and copies of receipts must be dated between disaster timeframe, as designated by the Governor and/or FEMA. Applications must be postmarked by Dec. 31, 2010.

---

### **Gateway to Your Benefit Information**

eBenefits is an online service jointly offered by VA and DoD. With eBenefits, Servicemembers and Vets are able to directly access their personal benefit information safely and securely – as well as download a DD-214, check claims status, and more. Please go to: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/appmanager/eb/veterans> to register.

**M - FIRST LADY'S MILITARY FAMILY CARE INITIATIVE TO CONTINUE, EXPAND**  
[www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org](http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org).

**Saint Paul** – With hundreds of Minnesota National Guard troops preparing to deploy to the Middle East next year, First Lady Mary Pawlenty announced today that the Military Family Care Initiative will continue and expand to provide additional assistance to military families during times of deployment.

The web-based program will, going forward, be run by the National Guard's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program.

In addition to community-based organizations volunteering their time and services, businesses will now be able to register services and discounts intended to benefit military families.

“During the last seven years, community-based organizations throughout Minnesota have provided volunteer services to lighten burdens placed on military families during deployment,” First Lady Mary Pawlenty said. “Under the National Guard’s direction, the Military Family Care Initiative will not only continue, it will expand.”

Launched in 2003 by the First Lady, the Military Family Care Initiative now has hundreds of groups and organizations registered to help Minnesota families. The success of the initiative has made it a nation-leading model, generating several similar programs in other states. Most recently, North Carolina First Gentleman Bob Eaves launched “Carolina Helping Heroes” based on Mary Pawlenty’s Military Family Care Initiative.

“As I visited last week with Minnesotans serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait, it was apparent that their families are never far from their thoughts,” Governor Pawlenty said. “Through the Military Family Care Initiative, community organizations and businesses can offer their support to our military families in tangible ways.”

The First Lady’s Military Family Care Initiative can now be found at [www.militaryfamilies.state.mn.us](http://www.militaryfamilies.state.mn.us), or a link on [www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org](http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org). The website will remain an electronic database for military families to locate and contact registered organizations, and now businesses, within their community who offer services to military families. Any community or faith-based organization can sign up through the website.

The National Guard’s Beyond the Yellow Ribbon staff will oversee the initiative and the addition of business services and discounts for military families.

“Many servicemembers and military families across Minnesota have benefited from the First Lady's Military Family Care Initiative. We thank her for her compassion and caring. The Minnesota National Guard's Military Family Care Initiative will carry forward the First Lady's vision,” Major General Larry Shellito, the Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General said. “I’m often asked, ‘How can I help?’ If your organization or business would like to offer support, please register at [BeyondTheYellowRibbon.org](http://BeyondTheYellowRibbon.org).”

With the National Guard and Reserves no longer serving only one weekend a month and two weeks a year, support of community organizations and businesses is very important to military families as they endure lengthy overseas deployments. Some service members are currently serving their second, third, or fourth tour of duty. Since September 11, 2001, the Minnesota National Guard and the Army Reserves have mobilized more than 20,000 soldiers and airmen to more than 33 countries.

The Department of Defense announced in July the alert of approximately 2,700 Minnesota National Guard Soldiers of the Bloomington-based 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division to prepare for a deployment in support of Operation New Dawn throughout Kuwait and Iraq in 2011-12. In addition, Minnesota active duty military members and reservists are continuously being deployed to the Middle East and elsewhere around the world.

## **TRICARE Provides Free Vaccinations**

TRICARE covers the seasonal and H1N1 flu and age-appropriate doses of vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Beneficiaries can visit participating TRICARE retail network pharmacies to receive seasonal flu, H1N1 flu and pneumonia vaccines at no cost. This expanded coverage is available to all TRICARE beneficiaries eligible to use the TRICARE retail pharmacy benefit. To find a participating pharmacy, visit TRICARE's Express Scripts webpage: <http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE/> or call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303. TRICARE regularly adds coverage for new vaccinations based on CDC recommendations on the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>

## **21 Safest Booster Seats Revealed**

In a new guide for parents, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reviewed the seat belt fit of 72 booster seat models available at major retailers or online, assigning a "Best Bet" rating to the 21 boosters that provided a correct fit across the full range of vehicle types. The institute, a nonprofit highway research group funded by automobile insurance companies, gave a "Good Bet" rating to seven other models that would give a correct fit in the majority of vehicles. See the complete list and the institute's full report at:

<http://www.iihs.org/research/topics/boosters/default.html>

## **Officials Extend Spouse Career Program Deadline**

Officials have extended a spouse employment program enrollment deadline in the hopes that more military spouses will be able to take spring semester classes. Effective Sept. 13, spouses currently enrolled in the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MYCAA) program will be able to request financial assistance for classes with a start date that is on or before Jan. 31. Previously, the start-date cutoff was Jan. 15. However, spouses still must submit their financial assistance request by Oct. 21. Starting Oct. 25, financial assistance will be limited to spouses of active duty Servicemembers in pay grades E-1 to E-5, W-1 to W-2 and O-1 to O-2. Spouses of Guard and Reserve members within those ranks can participate as long as they can start and complete their courses while their sponsor is on Title 10 orders. Military spouses can find more information about MyCAA on the Military OneSource website at: <http://militaryonesource.com> or by calling Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647.

## **Some Tax Benefits for College Costs Expire at End of 2010**

Congress has enacted several credits, deductions and other tax-advantaged programs to make college more affordable to families. At the end of this year, however, some of those benefits are scheduled to expire. Some changes are: The American Opportunity Credit, included in last year's economic stimulus package, provides a tax credit of up to \$2,500 per student in 2010. The credit can be claimed for up to 100% of the first \$2,000 in qualified college costs and 25% of the next \$2,000. To get the full credit, at least \$4,000 on qualified expenses must be spent. The credit is scheduled to expire on Dec. 31.

The following are suggestions to make the most of the credit: If \$4,000 has not yet been spent on college costs for this year: Prepay tuition. If tuition is paid before Dec. 31, those expenses can be claimed on 2010 tax return. Buy next semester's textbooks. Textbooks and course materials are qualified expenses for the American Opportunity Credit. For more helpful hints on how to save on college expense, click here:

[http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/columnist/block/2010-09-14-yourmoney14\\_ST\\_N.htm?csp=DailyBriefing](http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/columnist/block/2010-09-14-yourmoney14_ST_N.htm?csp=DailyBriefing)

## **VA burial benefits**

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at the time of need at any VA national cemetery, call the national cemetery scheduling office at 800-535-1117.

## **Benefits and Support for Transition Vets**

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) offers benefits for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans: (1) five years of cost-free health care, (2) a 180-day dental benefit, (3) going back to school using the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, (4) using VA Jobs and VetSuccess to find employment, and (5) use of local Vet Centers if Servicemember served in any combat zone. For more information, visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs Returning Servicemembers website: <http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>. For more information about transitioning, visit the <http://www.Military.com>.

## **New E-Newsletter Available for TRICARE Standard Beneficiaries**

A new e-newsletter aimed at TRICARE Standard beneficiaries is available online now at the TRICARE website. It supplements the printed Standard newsletter mailed every January to all Standard beneficiaries. The direct link to the e-newsletter is [www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart/product.aspx?id=789&s=standard](http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart/product.aspx?id=789&s=standard). To read this release in its entirety, please visit: <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news.aspx?fid=654>.

## **Federal Rules Published for TRICARE Retired Reserve**

The interim final rule for the TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) program has been published. This allows members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, the so-called "gray-area" retirees, to purchase TRICARE Standard coverage one big step closer to a planned program launch expected as early as September 2010. At that time, instructions about how to qualify for and purchase TRR coverage will become available. If purchased, TRR coverage is expected to go into effect as early as Oct. 1, 2010. To read this release, please visit: <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news.aspx?fid=650>

## **New Veteran Benefits Blog**

The new Military Advantage Blog offers Servicemembers, veterans and their families a great resource for news and information on a wide variety of benefit subjects including changes to state and federal benefits, pay and compensation health care, seldom used benefits and more. You can find the new blog in the Military.com benefits section. For further information, please go to: <http://www.military.com/veterans-report/new-veteran-benefits-blog?ESRC+vr.nl>.

## **Announces Vets Grants DOL**

The U.S. Department of Labor has announced two grants totaling \$849,890 to fund the Veterans' Employment and Training Service National Technical Assistance Center. The grants are being awarded under the Labor Department's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. The center provides technical assistance to grantees, conducts employment-related research on homeless veterans, and performs outreach to the employer community to increase job opportunities for veterans. More information on the Department of Labor's unemployment and re-employment programs for veterans can be found on the Department of Labor's VETS website at: <http://www.military.com/veterans-report/dol-announces-vets-grants?ESRC=vr.nl>

## **TRICARE Retired Reserve Launches**

With the Sept. 1, 2010 launch of TRICARE Reti-red Reserve (TRR), members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, the so-called "gray area" retirees, can purchase TRICARE health coverage for themselves and their eligible family members. To read this release, please visit: <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news.aspx?fid=656>



**M - Minnesota Wall of Honor - They deserve our support!**

A Minnesota Wall of Honor is being prepared to recognize the sacrifices of Minnesotans who have been killed in action (KIA) or died of wounds (DOWs) in the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts.

The Wall will be placed at the 934th Airlift Wing Officers' Club at Hwy 5 and Post Rd., Minneapolis.

Each military member's name, rank and branch of service will be engraved on a polished black 3"x5" plaque. The 4' x 8' frame of the memorial is made of beautifully hand-crafted oak. All plaques will be on the Memorial Wall for guests to view and pay honor for each member's sacrifice.

**Dedication for the Wall of Honor is Veterans Day, Thursday, November 11, 2010**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Please use the contribution form below to send in your check. This is a wonderful way for all members of MCMOAA and MnDept ROA to unite and create a lasting memorial to our fellow Minnesotans who have died in action in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Please send your check today. We suggest a minimum contribution of \$35.00 (the cost of one plaque).

Your donation is most appreciated.

The Minnesota Wall of Honor is sponsored by the members of the Minnesota Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MCMOAA) and the Minnesota Department of the Reserve Officers Association (MnDeptROA), with the cooperation and assistance of the 934th Airlift Wing.

**CONTRIBUTION FORM**

Help us honor those Minnesotans who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in combat during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn (Iraq), and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan).

**1LT John Paul Doe**

**U.S Army**

**12 July 2009**

This is a sample of a 3" X 5" plaque that will be mounted on the Minnesota Wall of Honor.

**The cost of each plaque is \$35.00**

Choose: \_\_\$35.00 \_\_\$70.00 \_\_\$105.00

Name

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check out to:

**MCMOAA - Minnesota Wall of Honor**

Mail to:

**Thomas Langlais, MCMOAA Treasurer**

**5901 Auto Club Road**

**Bloomington, MN 55438-2444**

**Thank you.** Your contribution is appreciated.

Your canceled check will serve as your receipt.

**March2Success**

The US Army would like the opportunity to assist students, demonstrating Army educational opportunities, Army values and resources and other Army assets. March2Success which is a **FREE tool** that assists students in **improving their knowledge and test scores in the areas of Language Arts, Mathematics and Science as well as improving SAT/ACT/State Exit Exams/ASVAB test scores.** Taking this free training opportunity generally improves the SAT/ACT test scores results by 2-3 points.

The student and parent are the only ones who see the results of this free training opportunity.

<http://www.March2sucess.com>

**M - Tee it up for the Troop Golf Tournament** Friday, Sept. 10, 2010 Oak Marsh Golf Club host the National Day of Golf, Tee it up for the Troop tournament. Shotgun start is at 2 p.m. followed by dinner and public fireworks. Brett Hedican, of the Carolina Hurricanes, St. Cloud State University and North High School will be on hand to meet and greet golfers. All funds raised will help support the Wounded Warrior Project, the Fischer House and families of disabled soldiers. Tee It Up For the Troops is a non-profit organization established by the family and friends of a soldier serving in the U.S. Army to help honor and recognize the needs of all Veterans who have served this nation. The goal is to annually make the Friday closest to Sept. 11 a national day of golf, saluting all those who have answered the call to duty. It is day to acknowledge and honor the sacrifice of all military Veterans and their families. Oak March Golf Course is located at 526 Inwood Ave. N. Oakdale, Minn. To register, visit <https://www.wpgolf.com/oakmarsh/teeitupforthetroops10.asp> or call (651) 730-8886

**M - 5K Family "Fun Run, Walk & Roll Sept. 25** The Minneapolis VA Health Care System and the Paralyzed Veterans of America will host a 5K event on Saturday, Sept. 25 for VA staff, Veterans, family members and the public. Event begins at 9 a.m. The cost is \$15 per entry and includes a T-shirt. The fun-run is free and kids will receive awards. Registration is available through the Public Affairs Office at the Minneapolis VAHCS, One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis. Participants must register before Sept. 10 to receive T-shirt. For information, contact Ralph Heussner at (612)467-3012 or [Ralph.Heussner@va.gov](mailto:Ralph.Heussner@va.gov).

### **M - Joint Retiree Activities Day (JRAD) 25 September 2010 Attention Fellow Retiree,**

We are less than one month away from our retiree seminar at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

If you have already registered, please ignore this email.

If you haven't registered, please consider joining us for another exciting day of good solid information about your military retiree benefits; good food; meeting some new people and possibly renewing some past friendships.

Click here to obtain registration information:

<http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AeW6nkxiVCCqZGR3amo0dl81Z3cyemc0Zjg&hl=en>

JRAD Committee

### **M - Veteran's Entrepreneur Seminar**

"How to Start a Small Business Seminar," presented by Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Maj. Gen Larry Shellito, Adj. Gen. of the Minnesota National Guard will take place Aug 31 at the HiWay Federal Credit Union, 840 Westminster St. St. Paul, Minn. from 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. The seminar will link OIF/OEF Veterans and current service members with the multiple agencies, mentors and funding sources that can assist in starting a business. An entrepreneur expo will run from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Space is limited and pre-registration is encouraged. For more information, visit [www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org](http://www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org).

### **"Focus on Family: Know Before You Go"**

A new American Forces Press Service Web special, "Focus on Family: Know Before You Go" is highlighting how military families prepare for and handle with deployments. The special features a variety of stories, from single dads preparing to deploy to dual-military couples who will be deploying together. It also includes links to helpful information, including service-specific deployment resources. To visit the site, go to:

[http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610\\_knowbefore/](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610_knowbefore/). For additional information and resources, go to the AUSA Family Programs website at: <http://www.ausa.org/resources/familyprograms/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Counseling for Military Couples**

Marital, couples and family therapy, often referred to as counseling, is available to eligible married couples enrolled in TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Prime Remote and TRICARE Prime Overseas. Active duty family members enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote can call their regional Behavioral Health Care Provider Locator and Appointment Assistance Line for help locating and making appointments with network behavioral health care providers in their area. TRICARE Prime Overseas beneficiaries can get information about providers from their local military treatment facility or TRICARE Service Center. For more information, visit <http://www.military.com/military-report/counseling-for-military-couples> [TRICARE's Mental Health Resource Center](#).

Military.com surveys found that most service members and their families are confused by TRICARE. [Get the facts and latest news on TRICARE](#).

## **Employment Readiness: Interview Tips, the Federal Job Search and Salaries**

### **The Federal Job Search**

The information in this column is pulled from The United States Office of Personnel Management After your search on [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) and you locate a job you are interested in, follow the following steps.

1. Understand the job. Gather information about the job, and look for the keywords.
2. Consider your qualifications. This includes your previous experience (paid and non-paid), level of education, and training.
3. Select a format for your resume, either chronological or functional.
4. Create a basic outline by writing employment and personal information.
5. List your experience.

- Outline your major work activities (2-4)
- Fill in tasks and skills associated with each work activity to show what you did and keep it simple and to the point.
- Integrate accomplishments to show results

Who was impacted as a result?

How significant was the impact?

What were the cost savings?

Did you exceed deadlines?

Did you receive awards or recognition?

What changed?

What improved?

6. List your education.

7. Write your optional cover letter

Information on the USAJOBS Resume Builder is found at <http://www.usajobs.gov/infocenter>

## **M - Free Entrance to State Parks**

Free one-day Minnesota State Park vehicle permits are available to military personnel stationed outside Minnesota and on leave, those visiting a state park within 90 days of leaving active service, and any resident Veteran with any service-connected disability. Bring your current military orders and military ID or a copy of your disability determination letter and let the park attendant know your military status when you arrive. A free annual Minnesota State Park permit is available to any Veteran who has a total and permanent service-connected disability. Present a copy of your determination letter to the park attendant for the free annual sticker.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has several discounts and programs for service members and Veterans, explore them all at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/military/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/military/index.html).

## **How to Negotiate Salary**

It is suggested that one single technique will assist you with negotiating a better salary. Don't just say "OK" to the first offer, pause and say "HMMM".

There are four steps in the salary negotiations. The first is the technique. After the employer offers you the salary, pause, repeat the salary and stay silent as if you are thinking about it. Be prepared to talk about your past experiences.

The next step is to be prepared and informed. Know (if possible) how badly the employer needs to fill the position. You should also find what the job and salary would be in your region. You can find this on <http://online.onetcenter.org> = [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org).

The third step is your behavior. Be excited and show enthusiasm! You need to show interest. Don't bring your personal needs to the discussion. Show (through words and actions) that you already consider yourself part of the team.

The last step is the discussion of the salary offer. Know what your absolute bottom offer is and be prepared to walk away if you are not offered it. Anticipate objections the employer may have and be prepared to back up your re-requests with justifications.

It is your decision! Can you be flexible? Perhaps it is less money but better healthcare options, flex time, or vacation time.

Information on this page extracted from: [online.onetcenter.org](http://online.onetcenter.org)



## **VA Issues New Yellow Ribbon College Aid List**

More than 1,100 private and public schools have signed agreements with the Veterans Affairs Department to reduce tuition for student veterans in the coming school year as part of the Post-9/11 GI Bill's "Yellow Ribbon" program. Under this program, VA matches dollar-for-dollar any reduction in fees charged to GI Bill students if tuition and fees exceed the reimbursement rate in the state where the school is located. Because schools can have more than one Yellow Ribbon agreement, VA officials said a total of 3,200 agreements are in effect for the 2010-11 school year. A list of participating institutions is posted at:

[http://www.gibill.va.gov/gi\\_bill\\_info/ch33/YRP/YRP\\_List\\_2010.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/gi_bill_info/ch33/YRP/YRP_List_2010.htm). Rules for applying for Yellow Ribbon benefits vary from school to school. Students interested in applying for the extra assistance should contact their college or university. For more information, go to:

[http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/08/military\\_VA\\_gibill\\_yellowribbon\\_080410w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/08/military_VA_gibill_yellowribbon_080410w/)

## **Honored in Death for Their Service in Life**

The Dignity Memorial® Homeless Veterans Burial Program provides dignified burial services for eligible homeless and indigent veterans to ensure they receive the honors in death that their service in life merited. Through the program, homeless and indigent veterans who have no family to claim them are identified and provided with a proper military burial. Currently available in 20 cities across the country, the Dignity Memorial Homeless Veterans Burial Program has provided burial services for more than 600 homeless veterans since the program's inception in 2000., To learn more about what is provided by Dignity Memorial providers and the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs please go to:

[http://www.dignitymemorial.com/dm20/en\\_US/main/dm/veterans/homeless\\_burial.page](http://www.dignitymemorial.com/dm20/en_US/main/dm/veterans/homeless_burial.page)

## **Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans' Families**

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans' Families (EBV-F) is an education and training program offered by the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University. The program leverages the flexibility inherent in small business ownership to provide a vocational and economic "path-forward" for military family members who are now caregivers to a Wounded Warrior - or for the surviving spouse of a military member who gave his or her life in service to our country. The EBV-F program integrates training in small business management, with caregiver and family issues, positioning the family member to launch and grow a small business in a way that is complementary or enhancing to other family responsibilities. The EBV Families program will be offered without any cost to accepted applicants. The EBV-F is currently accepting applications for this program. If interested, contact Ray Toenniessen at

[http://mailto:rmtoeni@syr.edu](mailto:rmtoeni@syr.edu) to apply. Applications will be accepted beginning April 5, 2010.

## **TRICARE for Guard, Reserve**

The TRICARE SMART website is a one-stop, online information portal full of accurate, up-to-date information about TRICARE benefits that members and their families can easily access in the comfort of their homes. The “TRICARE Choices Guide,” which can be found under “Handbooks” on the website, makes it easy for a guardsman or Reserve member to make informed decisions about programs such as TRICARE Prime and Standard for his or her family. A guardsman or reserve member can also subscribe to TRICARE alerts to receive updates on new benefits and programs. Military.com surveys found that most Servicemembers and their families are confused by TRICARE. Get the facts and latest news at: <http://www.tricare.mil/>

## **M - New Veteran and Military License Plates**

New Minnesota license plates are available beginning Aug. 1 for Veterans who received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal or the Silver Star.

Also, members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are active duty and a receive a Purple Heart are eligible to purchase Purple Heart plates. Previously, these plates were available only to Veterans.

For information about these and all license plates, visit the Minnesota Drivers and Vehicle Services (DVS) at [www.dps.state.mn.us/dvs/PIBrochure/PlateFrame.htm](http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dvs/PIBrochure/PlateFrame.htm) statewide and select Veteran from the menu on the left-hand side. Information is also available at DVS locations.

## **M - Free Entrance to State Parks**

Minnesota Veterans with any level of service-connected disability are now eligible for a free daily pass to any Minnesota State Park.

During the 2010 Legislative session, language was changed that opened up the opportunity for free entrance to the state’s 66 parks to any resident Veteran with any level of service-connected disability. Previously only those with total and permanent disability were eligible for the daily passes. Free yearly passes are still only available to those totally and permanently disabled. To utilize this program, Veterans must present a copy of their determination letter (DD 214) to a park attendant.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has several discounts and programs for service members and Veterans. To explore all the Military and Veteran benefits the DNR offers, visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/military/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/military/index.html).

## **M - Gold Star Mothers/Family Sunday**

The last Sunday in September is reserved to honor the mothers who have lost children in service to the United States. Gold Star Mothers have given so much, and continue to give back to the community through voluntary acts.



In Minnesota, Gov. Pawlenty also asks the citizens of the state to recognize and honor all Gold Star Families. Each year the National Gold Star Mother organization hosts a weekend of events in Washington, D.C.

Minnesota is host to an official Gold Star Mother chapter. The chapter also serves mothers in North and South Dakota. Learn more about the Minnesota Gold Star Mothers at [www.goldstarmoms.com](http://www.goldstarmoms.com). Find the Minnesota Chapter page under the “Depts & Chapter” menu.

### **Beneficiaries and providers can use the new TRICARE formulary search tool to find the most up-to-date information about prescription medications.**

Located at [http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary\\_search.php](http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary_search.php), the new formulary search tool allows beneficiaries to easily find which medicines are in the uniform formulary. These are available at all full-service military treatment facilities and covered by TRICARE.

Once a user has identified if a drug is available, they can use the search tool to get information on a drug, such as restriction on use. The tool also shows if the medication is Tier One (with a \$3 copay), Tier Two (with a \$9 copay) or non-formulary (requiring a \$22 copay.) It also shows when a generic equivalent is required.

As an added benefit, the new TRICARE Formulary Search Tool has integrated the Prior Authorization and Medical Necessity forms and criteria into a search engine while still maintaining a page with a complete list of all criteria and forms. Any restrictions such as quantity or age limits are displayed in one location.

“This should make it easier to find all relevant information about a specific drug instead of trying to click on different links to other web pages and sort through vast amounts of information,” said Jeremy Briggs, Pharmacy Operations Center official and search tool designer. “The idea is to have all that information available with one search, but still link back to pages for in-depth information.”

The search tool’s functionalities will increase and become more refined, based on feedback provided by patients and providers. According to Briggs, “The new TRICARE Formulary Search Tool is adaptable to meet the ever changing needs of our beneficiaries and we are planning to meet those needs.”

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions)

Connect with TRICARE on Facebook and Twitter at [www.facebook.com/tricare](http://www.facebook.com/tricare) and [www.twitter.com/tricare](http://www.twitter.com/tricare).

## **VA's My HealthVet**

My HealthVet is the Department of Veterans' Affairs' (VA) health website that offers veterans, active duty Soldiers, their dependents and caregivers anywhere, anytime Internet access to VA health care information and services. Veterans who receive care at a VA facility should ask about In-Person Authentication (IPA). Registered My HealthVet users who are VA patients and have completed the IPA process will be able to view the names of their VA prescriptions, access their personal VA Wellness Reminders and communicate with their providers. For further information or to read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.military.com/veterans-report/vas-my-health-e-vet>

## **Free Resources to Quit Smoking**

Trying to kick the habit? There's a new resource available to you, day and night, weekends and holidays, at no cost whatsoever: the [TRICARE Smoking Quitline](#).

## **New TRICARE Formulary Search Tool**

Beneficiaries and providers can use the new TRICARE formulary search tool to find the most up-to-date information about prescription medications. Located at [http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary\\_search.php](http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary_search.php), the new formulary search tool allows beneficiaries to easily find which medicines are in the uniform formulary. These are available at all full-service military treatment facilities and covered by TRICARE. Once a user has identified if a drug is available, they can use the search tool to get information on the drug, such as restriction on use. The tool also shows if the medication is Tier One (with a \$3 co-pay), Tier Two (with a \$9 co-pay) or non-formulary (requiring a \$22 co-pay.) It also shows when a generic equivalent is required. To read this release, please visit: <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news.aspx?fid=641>

## **Military Families Can Vote Absentee Online**

The Defense Department (DoD) launched an internet-based program to help Servicemembers and other Americans living overseas vote more easily in November's elections. The new, online voting assistant at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) is intended to make the registration and absentee ballot application process quick, easy, seamless and intuitive. The program is expected to increase the number of ballots counted for Servicemembers, who are known to vote at a higher rate than the general public. The online assistant was released as part of Armed Forces Voters Week and Overseas Citizens Voters Week. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=59815>. Register for voting absentee ballots in July at: <http://www.FVAP.gov>

## **New Eligibility Criteria for DOD ESGR Patriot Award includes Spouses' Employers**

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriot Award program recognizes employers for implementing employment policies and practices that are supportive of their employees' participation in the National Guard and Reserve. The Patriot Award certificate is intended for an immediate supervisor. In the past, individual

Reserve Component members have nominated their employers for the Patriot Award. Under a recent expansion, employers who show flexibility and support for a military family as a whole, especially spouses who have a Servicemember deployed, can be recognized. Spouses and Servicemembers can go to: <http://www.esgr.org/pa> to nominate your employers and learn more.

### **Free tickets for Events**

The **Veteran Tickets Foundation** is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to giving back to those who gave us so much. We team up with major sports teams, leagues, promoters, organizations, venues and everyday ticket holders to provide free and discounted tickets to the more than 26 million Veterans and Active Duty Military in the United States.

Sign up at [www.vettix.org](http://www.vettix.org) free tickets to events for veterans. When you sign up--- tell them SHELLIE MICHAELS sent you-- I am their board member.

The Veteran Tickets Foundation has inspired major organizations (some include MLB, NFL, NBA, NHL, NCAA...) across the country to donate tickets. Moreover, generous companies and private citizens are contributing their tickets as well as their financial support to help us purchase blocks of tickets to the most popular events. Even better, all donations to The Veteran Tickets Foundation—whether tickets or cash—are **tax deductible** to the full extent allowed by law.

[www.vettix.org](http://www.vettix.org)

### **Army Tuition Assistance**

Army Tuition Assistance (TA) provides financial assistance for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of a Soldier's professional and personal self-development goals. The program is open to nearly all Soldiers including Army Reserve, and Army National Guard on active duty. There are some restrictions to who may use Army Tuition Assistance and what courses may be applied to the tuition assistance. For more details, please download the Army Continuing Education System Regulations (AR 621-5). To learn more, please go to: <http://www.military.com/education/content/money-for-school/army-tuition-assistance.html>

### **New Gravesite Veteran Medallions**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is offering bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a veteran. The new item can be furnished instead of a traditional government headstone or marker for veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Next of kin will receive the medallion along with a kit. For more information on VA-furnished headstones, markers and medallions, visit: <http://www.va.gov/>. Instructions on how to apply for a medallion are on the VA website at: [http://www.cem.va.gov/hm\\_hm.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp). Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from

the VA website at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000. For more information, please go to: <http://www.military.com/veterans-report/new-gravesite-medallions?ESRC=vr.nl>

## **MyMoney.gov**

MyMoney.gov is the U.S. government's website dedicated to teaching all Americans the basics about financial education. Whether buying a home, balancing a checkbook or investing in a 401(k), the resources on MyMoney.gov can help maximize financial decisions. Throughout the site, there is important information from over 20 Federal agencies and Bureaus designed to help individuals make smart financial choices. Content is organized by where you are in life, who you are, and by specific hands-on tools. Popular Topics are also highlighted. This site provides summaries of resources available at other official government sites. To learn more about [MyMoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov), please go to: <http://205.168.45.52/>

## **DoD Officials Explain New Spouse Tuition Rules**

The My Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) tuition program for military spouses will reopen to new enrollees October 25, 2010, with some major restrictions on eligibility and funding. The popular MyCAA program's tuition assistance will be open only to spouses of junior Servicemembers in paygrades E-1 through E-5, W-1 and W-2 and O-1 and O-2. Spouses of National Guard and reserve members in those paygrades are eligible if their Servicemember has been activated on Title 10 orders. MyCAA will continue as is until October 25, 2010. That means currently enrolled spouses may request funds for the fall semester, regardless of the rank of their Servicemember, and even if they are in a four-year college program. After October 25, 2010, the new program rules will apply. Defense officials will e-mail each enrolled spouse to explain the changes. To read this article in its entirety, please go to:

[http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/07/military\\_mycaa\\_spousetuition\\_072010w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/07/military_mycaa_spousetuition_072010w/)

To read more on this topic, go to:

<http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=13725>. More information can be found on the MYCAA website:

<https://www.militaryonesource.com/MOS/FindInformation/Category/MilitarySpouseCareerAdvancementAccounts.aspx>.

## **M - Twin Cities Honor Flight**

**On Saturday October 23, 2010, the Twin Cities Honor Flight will sponsor a flight for 100 Minnesota WorldWar II Veterans, within a 40-mile radius of the Minneapolis/St Paul Airport. The Veterans and Guardians on this one-day excursion called Honor Flight Twin Cities, leave the Humphrey-Teminal 2 on a Charter Airline at **6:30 AM** and return at **11:00 PM**.**

**A Large Homecoming Party will be waiting for them when they return to the Humphrey- Terminal 2.**

**To assist Disabled Veterans, Honor Flight Twin Cities provides oxygen and wheelchairs as needed. The flights deluxe tour bus service, tee shirts, wheelchairs, meals and other amenities are provided free of charge to World War II Veterans. Also, 60 Trained Guardians will personally escort the 100 Veterans on the aircraft and accompany them throughout the day. A Video and Photos of the Honor Flight will also be provided to all the Veterans and Guardians. Guardians pay a \$500 Tax Deductible contribution for the trip. The WWII Heroes go for FREE. The October 23rd, flight is FILLED with WWII Veterans. We intend to have three Honor Flights' in 2011, and three in 2012 (schedule pending)**

**If you would like further information please contact Honor Flight Twin Cities at: Jerry Kyser Office: (651) 481-8835 or Cell: (651) 338-2717 The Website is [www.HonorFlightTwinCities.org](http://www.HonorFlightTwinCities.org)**

**[HonorFlightTwinCities.org](http://www.HonorFlightTwinCities.org)**

**HONOR FLIGHTS National Website**

**ATTN: Jerry Kyser**

**[www.HonorFlight.org](http://www.HonorFlight.org)**

**2674 Mackubin Street**

**(937) 521-2400**

**Roseville, MN 55113**

### **New Hotline for Homeless Veterans**

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) has announced a new telephone hotline to provide emergency support and resources to homeless veterans. The hotline of the new National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID VET will provide homeless veterans with timely assistance and coordinated access to VA and community services. Family members, workers at community agencies and non-VA providers also may call the hotline to find out about the many programs and services available to assist homeless veterans. For more information, visit the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans webpage at: <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/NationalCallCenter.asp>

### **New VA Family-to-Family Resources**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has a new, comprehensive Veterans Resource Center on its website for veterans and active duty personnel, as well as their families, friend, and advocates. NAMI also has a relationship with the Veterans Health Administration to include the Family-to-Family program at VHA facilities. To find out about a Family-to-Family opportunity at a VA near you, visit the NAMI website at: <http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Family-toFamily&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=4&ContentID=32973>

### **Summary of State Benefits for Veterans Available**

Military.com has developed an online general summary of educational benefits for veterans and their dependents. From veterans pursuing their educational goals to educational benefits for veterans and their dependents, particularly the children of deceased and disabled veterans, benefits can be found in most states. View the full summary by state here: <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/state-veterans-benefits-directory>

### **M - Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD)**

The planning for this year's Joint Retiree Appreciation Day (JRAD) is well under way for 25 SEP 2010. This year's event will again be held at Mystic Lake Hotel and Casino.

Please note that mailings this year are limited so, we're asking everyone to pass the word to all your retired military friends, etc. This is why it is so important to include your email address on your registration form and JRAD Survey / Questionnaire.

Attached is this year's registration form along with more information. Also note that you can find this same information on our website: <http://metrojad.blogspot.com/>

### **eKnowledge Donates \$32 Million of FREE SAT and ACT Test Prep Software to Military Families Worldwide**

In alliance with the Department of Defense and supported by patriotic NFL and MLB players, eKnowledge is donating \$200 SAT and ACT PowerPrep Programs to military Servicemembers and their extended families. eKnowledge has donated over 142,000 PowerPrep Programs with a value of \$32 Million to military families worldwide. Eligible recipients include Servicemembers from all branches of eth military who are active duty, retired, Veterans, Guard, Reserve, DoD employees, and civilians performing military support. Also eligible are relatives and dependants of anyone who otherwise qualifies from the prior list. Research indicates that there are millions of military Servicemembers who are unaware of the donated educational material. For further



information, please contact Lori Caputo at <mailto:LoriCaputo@eknowledge.com> or visit <http://www.eknowledge.com/USA>

### **VA Updates Application Form**

Veterans will find it easier and faster to apply for their health care benefits now that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated its online Form 10-10EZ, "Application for Health Benefits." This revised online application provides enhanced navigation features and allows Veterans to save a copy of the completed form for their personal records. Veterans may complete or download the 10-10EZ form at the VA health eligibility website. Veterans may also contact VA at 1 (877) 222-8387 (VETS) or visit the VA health eligibility website at: <http://www4.va.gov/healtheligibility/>

### **More Career Resources for Troops**

As the economic crisis lingers, returning veterans are finding it harder to translate the skills they have learned on the battlefields onto a resume, but some employers are working with the military to bridge the gap. The Employer Partnership Office of the Armed Forces (EPO) is providing the resources needed to help enlisted Soldiers, veterans, retirees and spouses secure employment after their tours of duty end. Job seekers are matched with such employers as Wal-Mart, General Electric and Con-way. Among its placement and credentialing services, candidates receive coaching, counseling and use of the program's job search engine, among other assistance. For more information, visit the EPO website at: <http://www.directemployers.org/partners/army-reserve/>

### **Golf, Life Lessons Available to Military Children**

It's tee time for children from military families, thanks to The First Tee Military Affiliate Program. The program not only sharpens children's skills on golf course greens and fairways, but it also provides life skills. Along with basic golf instruction, The First Tee coaches teach children interpersonal communication, managing emotions, goal-setting and overcoming obstacles. To sign up, parents can visit a First Tee chapter in their community or download a coupon for free instruction by visiting The First Tee website, <http://www.thefirsttee.org/military>. The site also includes a listing of chapter locations. To read this article in full, please go to: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=58972>

### **AAFES Now Accepting Printed Coupons**

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is now accepting manufacturers' coupons printed from the Internet. AAFES joins the commissary system and its sister exchange services – Navy exchanges and Marine Corps exchanges – and many private sector businesses who already accept Internet Coupons. Online coupons can be found at

manufacturers' websites and at countless online discount portals. AAFES requires the words "manufacturer coupon," a bar code, expiration date, redemption address, usage policy. For coupons with an open dollar value, where a customer can get something for free, cashiers must fill in the coupon with the AAFES price, according to the policy. To read this article in full, please go to;

[http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/05/military\\_aafes\\_coupons\\_051010w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/05/military_aafes_coupons_051010w/)

### **Obama Signs Vet Caregiver Support Bill**

President Obama has signed a bill that aims to keep severely wounded Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in their homes by providing billions of dollars in support to family members who care for them. At a bill signing event at the White House, Obama said the government's responsibility to take care of veterans and their families is a "moral obligation." The bill instructs the Veterans Affairs Department to offer post-delivery care to female veterans' newborns and create a child-care pilot program. It also includes expanded funding for programs assisting homeless and rural veterans. The price tag over five years is an estimated \$3.7 billion. Under the new bill, caregivers of the estimated 2,000 severely wounded veterans from the recent conflicts can receive training, a monthly stipend and health care. To read more, please go to;

<http://www.military.com/news/article/obama-signs-vet-caregiver-support-bill.html>

### **Blue Star Families and the National Endowment for the Arts**

Blue Star Families and the National Endowment for the Arts have partnered to ask museums across the country to sign on as "Blue Star Museums." As Blue Star Museums, they will provide free admission to military families this summer. Almost 600 museums across the nation have joined the program. Families can download a voucher with information on the program and links to an interactive map of museums at <http://bluestarfam.org/drupal/>. There will also be an online guest book in which families can post comments and record their experiences. More information on the program will be available online. The program launched May 24, 2010 in San Diego, CA. For questions or comments, please contact Margaret Mullins at: [to:mmmullins66@gmail.com](mailto:to:mmmullins66@gmail.com)

### **TRICARE Provides Deductible-Free Hospice Benefit**

The final stages of life can be difficult for patients and their families. To make these last days easier, TRICARE's hospice care benefit is a service focused on patients to give them the supportive services they need near the end of life. Hospice is a zero-deductible benefit and it gives TRICARE beneficiaries access to personal care and home health aide assistance. It initially provides two 90-day periods of care, followed by an unlimited number of 60-day periods. Each period requires prior authorization from the regional health care contractor. Not all care is covered by the hospice benefit. Individual hospices may charge for some items, such as outpatient medications or inpatient respite care. To read this article in its entirety, please go to:

[http://www.tricare.mil/Pressroom/news\\_print/.aspx?fid=627](http://www.tricare.mil/Pressroom/news_print/.aspx?fid=627). For more information about TRICARE deductible-Free Hospice Benefit, please go to; <http://www.tricare.mil>

## **New Rules for Families of Deceased Soldiers**

A recent change to Department of Defense (DoD) policy authorizes relatives of deceased Servicemembers round-trip travel and transportation allowances to a memorial event that occurs at a location other than the burial site. As part of the Army Family Covenant, commanders also are required to inform family members about any memorial event that is conducted by the unit in a combat theater. Authorized allowances include travel to and from the memorial service location, plus two days of per diem at the memorial site. Family members eligible for the special allowance include surviving spouse; deceased member's children, regardless of age; parents; brothers and sisters and any other person including a former stepparent, who has stood in "loco parentis" to the deceased member. To read this article in full and to view a list of casualty assistance centers, please go to: [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/05/army\\_berieved\\_family\\_052210w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/05/army_berieved_family_052210w/)

## **Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities**

Information about an initiative called the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) program (<http://whitman.syr.edu/ebv>). The EBV is an educational program offering training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 veterans with service-connected disabilities. The program is targeted at vets who have a desire to launch and grow businesses - either now or at some point in their futures. The program brings together some of the most accomplished academics, entrepreneurs, and Fortune 500 CEOs, with post-9/11 veterans, in an effort to help them realize their business ownership goals. The graduates are then plugged into a strong post-training support network, providing resources positioned to help them start and grow a business. The training is all done over the summer months, and starts with an online course, then a 9-day residency at one of the EBV schools. The program is offered by six world-class business schools across the U.S. - Texas A&M University, Florida State University, Purdue University, UCLA, the Univ. of Connecticut, and Syracuse University. It's a once in a lifetime experience for the vets - they keep the class size small at each school (20-25 vets per class) so that they have an intimate and personal experience. They get a chance to meet and interact one-on-one with the superstars of the business world - the folks you see on business magazine covers. In 2008, the program was named a National Best Practice by the Secretary of the Army for serving veterans and their families. To date, they have graduated more than 220 veterans from the program. The program is open to any vet who served since 2001 (active, guard, reserve), and that has a service connected disability rating of any level. The training takes place at each of the six universities at different times throughout the May through September time period. Importantly, the program is a 'social venture' for us; that is, they offer the program without any cost to the veterans. It's all funded privately, and they pay all program costs for accepted veterans, including airfare, lodging, food, everything. They are in the final stages of the 2010 application process for the upcoming cycle of EBV that commences this summer and we still have a two week window that we can accept and process applications for some of the sessions. Due to the quickly approaching deadline and in order to expedite the application

process please feel free to have the interested veteran contact Raymond Toenniessen directly at [rmtoeni@syr.edu](mailto:rmtoeni@syr.edu) or (315) 443-0256.

### **National Resource Directory Updated**

Created for Servicemembers, veterans, wounded warriors, and their families and caregivers, the National Resource Directory (NRD) is a tool for service providers to reach out to the military and veterans' communities. It provides access to thousands of services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. If you are aware of community programs and services that should be available to veterans, please submit them for review to the Suggest A Resource feature on the NRD. The National Resource Directory is a Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative. To visit the newly and enhanced website, please go to; <http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov>.

### **Apply To Adopt A Military Working Dog**

After completing their service, some military working dogs are made available for adoption. The adoption law gives priority to their handlers, then to civilian law enforcement agencies and finally to the general public. An Adoption Suitability Test which is given and videotaped by the dog's handler, is required by the Department of Defense (DoD) to determine if the animal is suitable for civilian adoption. To request an application, send an e-mail or call 210-671-5874. Additional information is available at: <http://www.militaryworkingdogadoptions.com/index.html>.

### **M – Warrior Transition Training: Minnesota Sales Training at the Rasmussen Colleges**

I wanted to introduce myself and the programs I offer our returning soldiers.. As a retired U. S. Army First Sergeant (29 years) and President of Minnesota Sales Training, I have developed sessions where I train soldiers to utilize Professional Sales & Negotiating Skills to "sell themselves" in an interview. I also sell the soldier on considering a career in sales & marketing, since they are already comfortable "doing what other people refuse to do"...they may as well continue that skill set and not have any competition in front of them in their job search.

The services are free and will be conducted at the Rasmussen Colleges throughout the State of Minnesota. The Blaine Campus is the newest Campus (just opened this month) and the facility is perfect for conducting professional training and development workshops.

Larry Josephs, President  
Minnesota Sales Training is a  
Veteran-Owned Small Business

1670 South Robert Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55118-3918 U.S.A.  
Phone: 612-868-1171  
[www.warriortransitiontraining.com](http://www.warriortransitiontraining.com)  
[www.mnsalestraining.com](http://www.mnsalestraining.com)  
ljosephs@mnsalestraining.com

"Soldiers are volunteers and trained to do what many others refuse to do; ironically, so are sales people! Hire military veterans as your sales reps....they always complete their mission!"

~ Copyright 2009 - Larry Josephs, U.S. Army First Sergeant (ret.)

### **M - MN Veterans Administration - CORE**

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) has teamed with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) to create MN Service C.O.R.E. - Serving Veterans, Military Members & their Families through Case Management, Outreach, Referral & Education.

MN Service C.O.R.E. is a new, nation-leading program designed to bring essential, community-based services directly to veterans families across MN at no cost to them. Due to its unique structure, this program will also provide resources to previously under served rural areas around the state.

The program works to remove barriers to help Veterans and their families receive the support they need: Support for Individuals and Families Counselors provide a wide range of counseling services to help individuals and families cope with situations, build positive behaviors and strengthen families as a whole.

#### **Assistance for Couples:**

Counseling services for couples dealing with stress, anxiety and communication issues within their relationship.

#### **Help for Children**

Specialized counseling, including play therapy, to help children, their parents and caregivers identify problems and establish guidelines geared toward issue resolution that improve the child's or adolescent's well-being.

These services offer "strength-based" programming and also crisis nursery services.

#### **Specialized Financial Counseling**

Money problems can create other problems. LSS offers budget, debt management, and bankruptcy counseling so that people can regain control of their finances.

#### **Expanded services.**

The MN C.O.R.E. program has recently added caregiver support and respite services along with expanded familycentered programs to its extensive lineup of services.

**New Services:**

Caregiver support and respite services focus is on family caregivers who are caring for a chronically ill person 60 years of age or older. The program is designed to provide support in a variety of ways according to the needs and the preferences of family caregivers.

O.N.E. (Oh No, Eighteen) provides individual transitional planning services, life skills group training and experiential learning challenges for youth of Veterans or service members who have experienced out of home placement, most often placement in foster care.

Parenting groups provide parenting and child social skills training and support, skills development and educational coaching through group environment.

Grand Family Connection/Kinship Care offers support and education, information and referrals for grandparents taking care of service members or Veterans children.

The goal is to provide grandparents and other kinship caregivers with emotional support and information about resources and options, education about issues pertinent to kinship care-giving families, and recreational opportunities aimed at strengthening the family unit.

For more information or to make an appointment, call 1.888.881.8261. For LSS services in your area, contact:

**Alexandria** - Big Stone, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Todd, and Traverse 320.762.5124

**Bemidji** - Beltrami and Clearwater 218.751.1305

**Brainerd** - Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, and Mille Lacs 218.828.7379

**Detroit Lakes** - Becker, Hubbard, Mahnomen, Norman, and Wadena 218.847.0629

**Duluth** - Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis 218.529.2287

**Fergus Falls** - Otter Tail 218.736.5431

**Mankato** - Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Jackson, Le Sueur, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Rice, Rock, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, and Winona 507.625.7660

**Minneapolis/St. Paul** - Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Isanti, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington 612.879.5320



**Moorhead** - Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, and Wilkin  
218.236.1494

**St. Cloud** - Benton, Kanabec, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright 320.251.7700

**Willmar** - Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Redwood, Renville, Sibley, Swift, and Yellow Medicine 320.235.5411

### **New Scholarship for the Children of Some Deceased Veterans--Benefit Honors Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry**

WASHINGTON - The children of military personnel who died in the line of duty since Sept. 10, 2001 can apply for an educational scholarship similar to the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. Benefits are retroactive to Aug. 1, 2009. The scholarship, which is administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, are named after Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry, 28, a Texas native who died in Iraq in 2006 while disarming an explosive. He is survived by three young children. "The Fry scholarship represents this nation's solemn commitment to care for children whose mothers and fathers paid the ultimate price for our country," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. VA begins accepting applications for the Fry scholarship on May 1, 2010. For more information or assistance applying, call toll-free 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551), or visit the VA GI Bill Website at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). VA estimates nearly 1,500 children will receive benefits under the Fry scholarship program in 2010. Recipients have 15 years to use their benefits, beginning on their 18th birthdays, through their 33rd birthdays. Eligible children attending institutions of higher learning may receive payments to cover their tuition and fees up to the highest amounts charged by a public, in-state undergraduate institution. A monthly living allowance and stipend for books and supplies are also paid under this program. VA will begin paying benefits under the Fry scholarships on Aug. 1, 2010. Eligible participants may receive benefits retroactively to August 1, 2009, the same day the Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect. Eligible children may be married. Recipients are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level. When dependents are also Veterans or service members eligible under the Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty, Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP), then they must relinquish their eligibility under those programs to receive benefits under a Fry scholarship. More information at [www.gibill.va.gov/documents/Fry\\_Scholarship.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/Fry_Scholarship.pdf)



## **Families United for our Troops and Their Mission**

Families United is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization whose mission is to Honor the Fallen, Support those who Fight, and Serve their Families through programs, events, and outreach. We are a national organization of Gold and Blue Star families—including many with loved ones in harm's way—as well as veterans and Americans who share a deep appreciation for our men and women in uniform and support them in their mission to keep America safe. Together, we ensure that the sacrifices of our courageous military do not go unnoticed and that these men and women and their families receive the support they need and deserve.

### **Registration Begins for the 2010 National Weekend of Remembrance**

Gold Star Families from across the country are invited to [register to attend](#) the 2010 National Weekend of Remembrance in Washington, DC on July 23-24, 2010.

The [National Weekend of Remembrance](#) is the largest gathering of its kind of Iraq and Afghanistan families of the Fallen. More than 2,000 Gold Star family members are expected to attend this event. Gold Star families in attendance will have opportunities to share stories of their fallen Heroes and understand, in a very real way, that they are not alone. You can help by [sponsoring a Gold Star Family](#).

Merrilee Carlson, Shrek's Mom, Chair email: [merrilee@familiesunitedmission.com](mailto:merrilee@familiesunitedmission.com)

651-319-1194 PO Box 65494, Washington, DC 20035 <http://www.familiesunitedmission.co>

### **PUT AN END TO ANNOYING PHONE CALLS**

Marketing firms and others routinely sell information such as home phone and cell phone numbers to telemarketing firms. Since the federal Do Not Call Registry was created, many people have registered their landline or home phone numbers – blocking countless unwanted phone calls.

However, many people have not taken the opportunity to register their cell phone numbers. Now you can. To put your cell phone number on the federal Do Not Call Registry, check out the Federal Trade Commission's website at: [www.ftc.gov/donotcall](http://www.ftc.gov/donotcall).

### **Military Families Get Free Access to Caregiver Network**

Military families now have free access to an online network of quality caregivers who can assist with everything from babysitting to dog walking.

Sittercity is the nation's largest online source for local babysitters, nannies, elder care providers, dog walkers, housekeepers and tutors, and contains more than a million caregiver profiles, officials said.

Military members and their families can activate their membership by going to <http://www.sittercity.com/dod>.

The Sittercity Corporate Program, funded by the Defense Department, offers military families -- including active duty, Guard and Reserve -- with a paid membership to the site.

"We believe that access to Sittercity's nationwide network of quality care providers will be highly beneficial to our servicemembers and their families," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy.

The paid membership enables military families entry to a custom-built Defense Department Web site portal where they can match up caregivers to their situation; gain instant access to caregiver profiles that include background checks, references and reviews; and find military-certified care providers as well as caregivers who are military-subsidized and authorized access to a military installation.

The site will help meet the unique needs of military families as they face deployments, long hours at work and assignments to remote locations, Thomas said.

"Because of the mobile nature of military life, trusted community resources are often difficult to identify and locate," he acknowledged.

"These online tools will help service and family members attain the best match between resource and need."

Thomas said servicemembers and their families can rest assured that they're being provided with top-notch care. The site "links military family members with somebody that the Department of Defense says, 'We've entrusted you to provide this service to our people,'" Thomas said.

"If that military member is out on the front line knowing that the family back home has a sense of ease and comfort, life is good for everybody," he added.

While the membership is free, servicemembers will be responsible for the hiring and payment of caregivers, officials said.

Military members and their families can activate their membership by going to <http://www.sittercity.com/dod> .

## **American Legion Offers Nursing Scholarship**

Applications are available for the American Legion's \$3,000 Eight and Forty Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarship for registered nurses. The deadline to apply for the nursing scholarship is May 15, 2010, with selections announced July 1, 2010. For more information about the nursing scholarship and other American Legion scholarship opportunities, or to request application packets, go to:

<https://www.myarmyonesource.com/News/2010/03/Legion>

Also **American Legion offers financial aid.** The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance program provides cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of veterans' children when it is established that no other resources are available to provide the required assistance. Veterans need not be members of The American Legion, but they must have served on active duty during one of the Legion's eligibility periods. Their children, stepchildren or children in their legal custody must be 17 or younger and not married. For more information visit the American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program webpage at: <http://www.legion.org/financialassistance>.

## **TRICARE Introduces New Benefits**

TRICARE introduced several new programs in 2009. The TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) provides short-term professional counseling assistance. For information about TRIAP and other behavioral health resources, visit the TRICARE Mental Health Resources Center. TRICARE's new Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) benefits for eligible family members who are diagnosed with extraordinary physical or psychological conditions. For more information on TRICARE's new dental program and pharmacy benefits, visit the TRICARE Active Duty Dental Program website at <http://www.addp-ucci.com> and the TRICARE Pharmacy Program webpage at <http://www.TRICARE.mil/pharmacy>.

## **National Resources Directory**



The US Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs are pleased to introduce the re-designed and enhanced National Resource Directory Web site, [www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov](http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov). Created for Wounded Warriors, Veterans and their families and caregivers, the new National Resource Directory has proved to be a useful tool for service providers who support the military and Veterans communities. The

National Resource Directory provides access to over 10,000 services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. We are proud to assure our users they can trust the content as a content management team that includes several Veterans and subject matter experts' reviews resources regularly. A few features of the new Web site include a faster, more robust search engine; a Bookmark & Share capability for use with social media tools; and an "In the News" feature that provides links to news and updates about Wounded Warrior and Veterans issues. Also included on the site is an expanded Homeless Assistance section where users can find information on a variety of programs and benefits. Visit the National Resource Directory at [www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov](http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov) to explore and sign up for RSS or e-mail updates about new content, events and features.\

## **M - Guardian Angels for Soldiers Pets**

Many programs help military members' families during a deployment, but what about their four-legged friends?

Guardian Angels for Soldiers' Pet, a nonprofit organization made up of all volunteers, locates foster homes for the pets of servicemembers who are deployed, training or experiencing an emergency or financial hardship.

Linda Spurlin-Dominik, the group's chief executive officer, said the group was formed in January 2005 after the founders learned that troops across the country had pets that needed a loving and safe home while their owners were deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and other designated combat areas.

"Soldiers had no options with their pets and had to turn over their pet's ownership to shelters and rescue groups across the country," Spurlin-Dominik said. The organization now has about 800 potential foster homes and 55 foster pets, she added.

Additionally, the group lends support for emergency services such as transportation, boarding and veterinarian care, Spurlin-Dominik said.

Pet and the Indiana state coordinator, said the group has every kind of pet.

"We have a majority of dogs and cats, but we have helped horses and birds," Shively said. "Servicemembers consider their pets as kids or best friends, so to be able to assist them by getting their pets into a foster home so they do not have to surrender them to a shelter or a rescue organization is just absolutely great."

Army Sgt. Donietta McPowell, a Frankfort, Ky.-native training here with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, said she would have used the program if her parents had been unable to provide a home for her pet.

"I had no idea programs like that existed. I will inform all my [fellow soldiers] back home," McPowell said.

Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Travis Rogers, a maintenance test pilot, also with the 147th Aviation Regiment, said he also would use the services if he had no one to turn to. “If I was single, I would differently have used the program,” he said.

Servicemembers, veterans or their families who need a safe home for their pets can request services either through the group’s Web site, <http://www.guardianangelsforsoldierspet.org>, or by calling 501-325-1591 to begin the process.

Once the owner is registered and a foster home has been selected, Spurlin-Dominik said, a written agreement is prepared for the pet owner, the foster home and a representative approved by the group to help reach agreement on the cost and duration of the pet’s stay with the foster home.

“The organization does not charge any fees, but the military pet owner will be responsible for any veterinarian bills and food cost for the pet, which would basically be the same if they were not deployed,” she explained, adding that some foster homes do not charge for pet food.

Once an agreement has been made, the foster home will take custody of the pets until the servicemember returns home.

**Mailing Address:**

Guardian Angels for Soldier’s Pet, Minnesota Chapter 32

13821 Thomas Ave S

Burnsville, MN 55337-4254

**Phone:** (952) 894-9264

**Email:** [gaspmmc32@guardianangelsforsoldierspet](mailto:gaspmmc32@guardianangelsforsoldierspet)

[www.GuardianAngelsforSoldiersPet.org](http://www.GuardianAngelsforSoldiersPet.org)

**Military and Federal Employee Discounts:**

All these businesses offer military discounts; all you have to do is ask.

***Restaurants***

- Arby's
- A&W
- Back Yard Burgers



- Burger King
- Captain D's
- Chick-Fil-A
- Cotton Patch
- Denny's
- Dunkin' Donuts
- IHOP (20 percent discount with military identification)
- Java Cafe
- KFC
- Long John Silver
- Pancho's Mexican Buffet
- Pizza Hut
- Quizno's
- Sizzler
- Sonic
- Taco Bell
- Whataburger

***Services***

- AT&T
- California Cryobank
- Geico
- Jiffy Lube
- Meineke
- Sears Portrait Studio

***Travel and Leisure***

- Blockbuster
- Movie theaters
- Ripley's attractions and museums
- Professional Sports teams

***Products***

- Apple Computers
- AutoZone
- Barnhill's
- Bass Pro Shop
- Bath and Body Works
- Big 10 Tires
- The Buckle
- Champs Sports
- Copeland's Sports
- Dell
- The Discovery Channel Store
- Dress Barn
- The Finish Line
- Foot Action

- Footlocker
- Gadzooks
- GNC
- Goody's
- Great Party
- Happy Harry's
- Hot Topic
- Jockey
- Lerner
- Michael's
- NAPA Auto Parts
- New York & Company
- Pac Sun
- Payless Shoes
- Play It Again Sports
- Pure Beauty
- Quizno's
- Sally Beauty Supply
- Spencer's Gifts
- Suncoast
- Timberland Outlets
- Wilson's Leather

#### **Cell Phone Service Discount**

All Federal employees are able to get a 15% discount on their personal cell phones by calling their carrier and mentioning the "Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 - Discount to Federal Employees Past and Present."

Cingular - 800-319-6393

Sprint - 877-812-1223

T-Mobile - 866-646-4688

Nextel - 800-639-6111

Verizon - 800-865-1825

You will need to know the military member's supervisor's name, phone number, and full address, so that his/her military status can be verified.

#### **CaringBridge**

Right now, there are families facing a devastating health situation that needs the support, healing and connection a CaringBridge community provides, but they don't know about CaringBridge. If you know someone facing cancer, pregnancy complications, or a serious injury, tell them about CaringBridge today. To learn more about CaringBridge, please go to: <http://www.caringbridge.org>

#### **M - Free Outward Bound Expeditions for Veterans**

Interested in kayaking Wisconsin's Apostle Islands, or canoeing in Minnesota's Boundary Waters? Outward Bound is providing a limited number of free all-expenses paid wilderness expeditions to OIF/OEF Veterans and service members.

For information and to sign up, call 1(866) 669-2362 ext. 8387. or visit

[www.OutwardBound.org/veterans](http://www.OutwardBound.org/veterans)

2010 Minnesota Expeditions:

- June 7-13 Boundary Waters Canoe Trip

(Registration closes May 7)

- July 22-27 Apostle Island Sea Kayaking

(Registration closes June 22)

-Aug. 9-15 Boundary Waters Canoe Trip

(Registration closes July 9)

### **TRICARE Newsletters Get the Word Out Electronically**

TRICARE beneficiaries can sign up at <http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions> to have the latest TRICARE benefit news sent to them electronically. All of the newsletters and bulletins TRICARE currently prints are available online and can be delivered electronically straight to an e-mail inbox. To read this release, please visit:

<http://www.tricare.mil/pressroom/news.aspx?fid=600>

### **Free "Welcome Home" Banner**

At [BuildASign.com](http://www.BuildASign.com) they are very proud of the continued service and sacrifice that our military personnel selflessly provide every day. To express their support of our brave men and women in uniform, they want to invite you to take part in their free "Welcome Home" banner promotion. Beginning in July 2008, they began offering free "Welcome Home" banners to the friends and family of members of the Armed Services coming home from overseas. To date, they have given away over 60,000 banners. All banners can be customized in full color, including pictures; they just ask that the customer pay the shipping and handling fee. For more information, please go to:

<http://www.BuildASign.com/Troops>.

### **Military Pathways by Screening Program for Mental Health**

To help those who may be struggling, the Department of Defense (DoD) has now teamed up with the nonprofit organization, Screening for Mental Health®, to launch Military Pathways™ (formerly the Mental Health Self-Assessment Program®). The program is available online, over the phone, and at special onsite events held at installations worldwide. It provides free, anonymous mental health and alcohol self-assessments for family members and Servicemembers in all branches including the National Guard and Reserve. The self-assessments are a series of questions that, when linked together, help create a picture of how an individual is feeling and whether they could benefit from talking to a health professional. The primary goals of the program are to reduce stigma,



or Jan Kyser [jkyse@steven-scott.com](mailto:jkyse@steven-scott.com)

### **Social Security Benefit**

If you served on active duty any time between 1957 and 2001, you may qualify for a higher social security payment because of your military service. Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings credits may help you either qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. Special extra earnings credits are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra earnings credits are not granted for inactive duty training. For additional information about special extra earnings for military service, please click on the following link: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

### **PTSD Vets May Get Benefits**

Boost Army Times Military officials have agreed to pay potentially millions of dollars to service members who were medically retired for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with disability ratings of less than 50 percent. A class action lawsuit agreement between the plaintiffs and government states that anyone rated at less than 50 percent for PTSD between Dec. 17, 2002, and Oct. 14, 2008, will automatically receive a rating of 50 percent. That means possible back pay for anyone whose PTSD is combat-related. It is an opt-in lawsuit, which means veterans must sign up to benefit from it. The deadline for joining is July 24, 2010. The PTSD does not have to be the direct result of combat; service members rated for other kinds of trauma, such as rape or another violent crime, also qualify for the higher rating. Veterans who feel they may be eligible can find more information at <http://www.ptsdlawsuit.com>.

### **Military Families Can use Sitter Site For Free**

The Department of Defense (DoD) is now paying for an Internet service called Sittercity, which helps military families find in-home child care, nannies, tutors, elder care providers, pet sitters and other services in their local communities. Active-duty Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps members and their families, as well as National Guard and Reserve members, can receive a free membership to the service, which usually costs an average of \$120 a year. Retirees are not eligible. For more about how military families can use sitter site for free, please go to: [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/01/military\\_free\\_sittercity\\_012210w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/01/military_free_sittercity_012210w/)

### **M - Minnesota C.O.R.E. Expands Services**

Minnesota C.O.R.E. (Case management, Outreach, Referral and Education) program has added caregiver support and respite services and has expanded its family-centered programs to better assist Veterans, current service members and their families.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has partnered with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota to offer the Minnesota C.O.R.E. Program. This comprehensive program offers mental health counseling, financial counseling, case management, deployment and reintegration support, anger management and other supportive services statewide. The first of its kind, C.O.R.E. is available at no charge for qualified participants. Today, over 680 families have been assisted, and demand is growing across the state.

In response to the needs of Minnesota Veterans and service members, MDVA and LSS have added the following opportunities for families:

New Services:

- **Caregiver support and respite services** focus on family caregivers who are caring for a chronically ill person 60 years of age or older. The program is designed to provide support in a variety of ways according to the needs and the preferences of family caregivers.
- **O.N.E. (Oh No Eighteen)** provides individual transitional planning services, life skills group training and experiential learning challenges for youth of Veterans or service members who have experienced out of home placement, most often placement in foster care.
- **Parenting and child social skills training and support**, skills development and educational coaching through a group environment.
- **The Grand Family Connection/Kinship Care program** offers support and education, information and referrals for grandparents taking care of service members' or Veterans' children. The goal is to provide grandparents and other kinship caregivers with emotional support and information about resources, educational and recreational opportunities aimed at strengthening the family unit .

For more information about the Minnesota C.O.R.E. program and other state benefits and service call 1-888-LinkVet (5838) or visit <http://www.MinnesotaVeteran.org>.

### **HeroBracelets.org**

HeroBracelets.org would like to send a small token of our appreciation to every Gold Star Family in America. We're not sure if we can actually do this, but we're going to try.

Initially, we'll give a free HeroBracelet to the first 150 Gold Star Families that write us. If we're able, financially, to continue to give a bracelet to every Gold Star Family in America, we will.

HeroBracelets.org has no financial backing and no full time employees and we operate by word of mouth. We started HeroBracelets.org to raise money for the families of those lost to war and our mission has expanded greatly since we started in 2004.

But for now, we want to give a gift of remembrance to as many Gold Star Families as we can.



HOW IT WILL WORK - PLEASE, one free HeroBracelet to Gold Star Family.

- To order your free Memorial HeroBracelet, email a memorial to your lost loved one to [info@herobracelets.org](mailto:info@herobracelets.org). Your memorial can be anything you choose. Write whatever you like and feel free to include photos. Your memorial will have a special place on the [Herobracelets.org](http://Herobracelets.org) Web site.

- When you send us your memorial, we'll email you a coupon code good for the free bracelet.

- Order as you would. You may order other HeroBracelets offerings, silver, copper, leather, tags etc. The cost of the Memorial HeroBracelets (\$13.00) will automatically be deducted from your order when you use your coupon code.

- Shipping is not included.

Your HeroBracelets will get to you in about a week with our great appreciation.

Go to [http://www.herobracelets.org/?page\\_id=1082](http://www.herobracelets.org/?page_id=1082) for the link.

### **Those Due 'Stop-Loss' Pay Must Apply**

About 185,000 veterans who were forced by wartime “stop loss” orders to serve on active duty beyond their approved retirement dates are due a retroactive special payment of \$500 for each extra month they served. But these veterans must apply by Oct. 21, 2010 to receive the extra money which was set aside in appreciation for the extra time they had to serve. Through December 2009, only about 15,000 veterans and current members had applied for “Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay.” The average lump sum payment made to eligible Army veterans so far is \$4500. That suggests an average stop-loss period of nine months, considerably longer than required by any other service. To read this article written by Tom Philpott, please go to:

<http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,208733,00.html?ESRC=eb.nl>

### **Operation Homelink**

Operation Homelink provides refurbished computers to the spouses or parents of junior enlisted (E1-E5) U.S. deployed Service members, enabling email communication with their loved ones deployed overseas. To date, the nonprofit organization has partnered with corporate donors to link 3,200 deployed Soldiers with their families using Internet-friendly computers. Regardless of where computers are sent, they are provided to units that are scheduled to deploy overseas in the next 90 days. Operation Homelink does not accept individual requests for computers, but the organization does accept donations. For more information, visit the Operation Homelink website at:

<http://www.operationhomelink.org/>

## **Toolkit Helps Answer Service member's Healthcare Questions**

One in five Service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffers from major depression or post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. To help Service members affected by a behavioral or other health condition, TRICARE created the Toolkit for Wounded, Ill, and Injured Service members. The Toolkit is located at <http://www.tricare.mil/wii> and it's a good resource for wounded service members seeking information about healthcare.

## **Looking for an Old Military Buddy**

[Military.com](http://www.military.com) has a new tool to assist veterans with locating old military acquaintances. Military.com's Buddy Finder is a fast and easy way to find old military friends from training or combat. To use Military.com's Buddy Finder, go to: <http://www.military.com/buddy-finder/?ESRC=vr.nl>

## **March2Success**

March2Success is open to anyone age 13 and older who is looking for help in the subjects of language arts, math or science. The free Web site also aids in development of test taking skills and study habits. The practice tests and exercises are based on high school placement exams, state standard assessment tests, SAT/ACT and other college admissions tests. There is also college-planning tools available, information on college selection and application process. Log on to [www.march2success.com](http://www.march2success.com)

## **Tax Statements Coming Next Week on myPay**

Annual tax statements soon will be distributed to Service members, military retirees, annuitants and federal civilian employees who are paid by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). The statements will be available electronically up to two weeks earlier to DFAS customers with myPay accounts. For a complete schedule go to: <http://www.dfas.mil/> To read this article in its entirety, please go to: [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/12/military\\_taxforms\\_121009w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/12/military_taxforms_121009w/)

## **Free Life Coaching for Wounded Warriors**

The Purple Heart Project provides free "life coaching" to Wounded Warriors -- those Servicemembers who have been injured while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. 'Life coaching' helps individuals determine and achieve their personal goals, which is valuable in helping individuals in their transitioning process. Life coaching provides a dynamic opportunity for Wounded Warriors by helping them establish a strategic plan of action, and lay out definitive goals that are achievable, and help them in their successful transition to civilian life. The Purple Heart Project is now accepting applications from 'Wounded Warriors' who are interested beginning in 2010. Most coaching will occur over the telephone with some communication via email. This program is available to all eligible individuals nationwide. For more about the project, visit their website at: <http://www.thepurpleheartproject.org>.

## **Estimate Your Disability-Retired Pay**

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) launched their new Medical Disability Retired Pay Estimator, an interactive online tool for medically retiring Wounded Warriors, available at the DFAS website. The scenario-driven tool provides users the ability to estimate their post retirement income from DoD and VA such as retired pay, Concurrent Receipt and Combat Related Special Compensation. Results also include how calculations are produced based on current law and the impact of legislation on total disability income. To go to the DFAS website, click here:

<http://www.dfas.mil/militarypay/woundedwarriorpay.html>

## **Families Can See Off, Greet Troops at Airport Gates**

TSA permits the airlines to offer a gate pass to family members of arriving or departing U.S. Servicemembers. Though TSA allows this practice, the final decision rests with the airlines, from which family members must request the passes. Each airline, and possibly even airport, has its own rules and procedures. Families interested in obtaining a gate pass need to check with the airline before arriving at the airport to determine the exact rules and procedures. TSA makes this allowance out of support for the armed forces. Though military family members with gate passes can pass through security, they must adhere to all security regulations. This includes removing coats, jackets and shoes, and the liquids regulation. Anything of a liquid or gel consistency must be 3.4 ounces or less and be sealed in a quart-sized storage bag to pass through security. Each family member would have to present the gate pass as well as a valid government-issued identification card. To learn more, go to: <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/12/16/31897-families-can-see-off-greet-troops-at-airport-gates/index.html>

## **Respite Child Care Expands**

The Armed Services YMCA Respite Child Care program recently expanded to all 50 states. The program provides up to 16 hours of child care for families of deployed Guard and reserve personnel. It's meant to be a "short break" for the parent or guardian responsible the child's care and not a substitute for full-time or daily care. For more information including a list of available locations, visit the Armed Services YMCA Respite Child Care Program webpage at:

<http://www.asymca.org/Programs.aspx?PgmlID=3&mid=27>

## **Choices Let Guard, Reserve Members Transition with TRICARE**

TRICARE now offers many options for recently deactivated guardsmen, reservists and their families to maintain their health during the transition from active duty back to civilian life. After serving in contingency operations for more than 30 days, deactivated guardsmen, reservists and their family members are eligible to receive care through the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) for 180 days after deactivation. TAMP participants can choose TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Prime if it is locally available. To find out more information, go to

:<<http://www.tricare.mil/pressroom/news.aspx?fid=571>>

## **Children of National Guard and Reserve Welcomed at the First TEE Chapters**

In 2010, The First Tee will offer golf instruction combined with character and life skills education to children of National Guardsmen and Reservists living in communities across the country. The initiative is made possible as part of a two-year agreement with the Department of Defense (DoD). The goal is to welcome at least 6,000 school-aged participants from military families to The First Tee for no cost programs. Prior golf experience and equipment are not necessary. Trained coaches and staff at over 200 Chapters of The First Tee offer a progression of lesson plans that create a fun and safe learning environment. The curriculum fosters curiosity about the game of golf and teaches how the positive values inherent in the game can be used at home, in school and in other areas of everyday life. For Chapter locations or to download a voucher, families should visit <http://www.thefirsttee.org>

## **New Military Website**

My.Army.Mil is the U.S. Army's user-customized website. This is the first of its kind across all military branches in the Department of Defense (DoD). The U.S. Army launched this website on December 4, 2009, in an effort to create a more personalized browsing experience and to connect the Army community.

[www.My.Army.Mil](http://www.My.Army.Mil)

## **Homefront Hugs USA**

Announcing Homefront Hugs Kids and Teen Clubs. Homefront Hugs Kids and Teen clubs will be starting in every school and community in 2010 led by enthusiastic and bright elementary, middle and high school kids all over the nation with the partnership of parents, teachers and spiritual leaders. Homefront Hugs USA is searching for leaders-kids and adults now. For more information, email: [HomefrontHugsUSA@aol.com](mailto:HomefrontHugsUSA@aol.com). Parents, please share this with your children's teachers and PTO.

## **New Redesigned VA Website**

The Veterans Affairs Department (VA) has begun the first phase of a large scale renovation to the VA website. Some of the major changes include: improvements to the navigational structure, a slideshow section which showcases current VA events or hot topics; and a "Quick List" with links directly to important applications. To view the new version of the website, visit: <http://www.va.gov>.

## **Military OneSource offers Free Tax Preparation and filing**

- >Maximize your refund

- >Simple, easy process

- >Use your tax refund wisely – save & pay off debt

- >Call **1.800.342.9647** - for more information. [About Military OneSource](#)

Visit [www.MilitaryOneSource.com](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com) to file your federal & state taxes

## M - Minnesota Income Tax Credit for Past Military Service

- [What is the new income tax credit for past military service?](#)
- [Who qualifies for the new credit for past military service?](#)
- [What is a nonrefundable credit?](#)
- [How does a nonrefundable credit compare with an income tax subtraction?](#)
- [How is the military service credit income-limited?](#)
- [What are some examples of individuals who will and will not receive the new military service credit?](#)

*What is the new income tax credit for past military service?*

The 2008 omnibus tax bill ([Laws 2008, ch. 366](#)) provides for a new income tax credit for past military service. The credit equals \$750 for qualifying individuals. It is nonrefundable and is subject to an income limitation. **The credit takes effect beginning in tax year 2009 and will first be claimed on tax year 2009 returns filed in 2010.**

*Who qualifies for the new credit for past military service?*

To qualify for the new credit, a veteran must:

- ▶ have served in the military (including the National Guard and reserves) for at least 20 years; or
- ▶ have a service-connected disability rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs as being 100 percent total and permanent.

*What is a nonrefundable credit?*

Individuals currently serving in the military do not qualify for the credit.

A nonrefundable credit may be used only to offset Minnesota income tax liability. A veteran must have at least \$750 of income tax liability to receive the full credit amount. A qualified veteran with less than \$750 of state income tax liability would be eligible for an amount of credit equal to the amount of liability. A qualified veteran with no state income tax liability would not receive a credit.

*How does a nonrefundable credit compare with an income tax subtraction?*

In tax year 2009, when the credit takes effect, a single veteran with no dependents who claims the standard deduction would need to have \$23,270 of federal adjusted gross income to receive the full \$750 credit.

A nonrefundable credit has an effect on final liability similar to that of an income tax subtraction. A credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability, while a subtraction reduces taxable income, which results in lower tax liability. The benefit from a subtraction depends upon the taxpayer's tax bracket or rate. Because of the income limits, veterans who qualify for the credit

will be in the bottom or lowest tax bracket with a rate of 5.35 percent. The \$750 nonrefundable military service credit is equivalent to a \$14,020 income tax subtraction (\$14,020 times 5.35 percent, the state income tax rate for the first bracket of taxable income, equals \$750).

Only individuals with tax liability will benefit from either a nonrefundable credit or a subtraction, and the amount of the benefit is limited to their tax liability.

***How is the military service credit income-limited?***

The military service credit is phased out for individuals with federal adjusted gross income (FAGI) of \$30,000 or more. The credit is reduced by 10 percent of FAGI in excess of \$30,000, so that individuals with FAGI over \$37,500 are not eligible for a credit.

FAGI is calculated on the federal tax forms (lines 37 on Form 1040, line 21 on Form 1040A, and line 4 on Form 1040EZ for tax year 2007). It includes most kinds of income, such as:

- ▶ wages, salaries, and tips;
- ▶ taxable interest;
- ▶ dividends and capital gains or losses;
- ▶ business income or loss, including income from partnerships and S corporations;
- ▶ taxable IRA, pension, and annuity distributions;
- ▶ farm income or loss;
- ▶ unemployment compensation; and
- ▶ taxable Social Security benefits (the amount of Social Security benefits that are taxable depends on the individual's income level; at most, 85 percent of benefits are included in federal adjusted gross income).

Some of the major items excluded from FAGI are:

- ▶ deductible retirement plan contributions;
- ▶ nontaxable employee fringe benefits;



- ▶ student loan interest payments;
- ▶ one-half of self-employment tax; and
- ▶ health insurance premiums (for self-employed taxpayers only).

***What are some examples of individuals who will and will not receive the new military service credit?***

Qualifying veterans with less than \$30,000 in taxable military retirement income, and no other income other than Social Security, would qualify for up to the maximum \$750 credit. The actual credit received would depend on the individual's tax liability. Since Social Security benefits are not included in FAGI for low-income filers, receipt of Social Security will not subject an individual to the income-based phase out.

Qualifying veterans employed in second careers and with FAGI over \$37,500 will not receive the credit due to the income phase out. Those employed in second careers will be eligible for a full or partial credit if their federal adjusted gross income is less than \$37,500.

Qualifying veterans who are 100 percent totally and permanently disabled might or might not receive the credit depending on the amount of the veteran's taxable income (military disability pay itself is nontaxable). With no taxable income or with more than \$37,500 of adjusted gross income, such disabled veterans would receive no credit. Conversely, with any amount of taxable income greater than zero and less than \$37,500, the disabled veteran would receive a full or partial credit.

**For more information:** Contact legislative analyst Nina Manzi at 651-296-5204 or Jim Cleary at [Jim.Cleary@house.mn](mailto:Jim.Cleary@house.mn)

[Minnesota Income Tax Credit for Past Military Service \(PDF Version\)](#)

## **MY LIBRARY on AKO**

Whether it is information you need for your career, your education, your home or your family – we either have it or we can get it for you. Unlike common search engines on the Internet, our sources on **My Library** via AKO are *always* reliable and authoritative. **My Library** via AKO has a wealth information available anytime, anyplace.

DIY: Doityourself

**Tired** and feeling **broke** from the mechanic and repair shop? Trying to decide if you should have something professionally repaired, **repair it yourself** or just buy a new one? Customizing your motorcycle? Check out **ChiltonLibrary.com, Auto Repair Reference**

**Center**, the **Small Engine Repair Reference Center** or the **Home Improvement Reference Center**.

*Access wiring diagrams, diagnostic codes, technical service bulletins & recalls, specifications & maintenance schedules, Labor Time Guide & Estimator as well as home improvement ideas and projects such as: maintenance, remodeling, electrical work, plumbing, wood projects, outdoor improvements, home decorating & gardening, etc.*

All of these sources, plus many more are available via **My Library** on AKO. From the AKO home page select *Self Service* on the top left menu and then select **My Library**. Find comprehensive DIY databases under the **Automotive** and **Family Life** tabs.

Questions? Check out your servicing library and chat with a librarian for more information.

**Questions:** Think you've tried everything and you still can't find the information you need? Curious about what else is available via My Library on AKO? Check out your servicing library and chat with a librarian or try the **24/7 Ask a Librarian QuestionPoint** service provided by participating Army libraries. The **Army Libraries Directory** is available on the **Army Library Program web site**.

## **XEROX IS DOING SOMETHING COOL**

"Let's Say Thanks" and Xerox are partnering in an effort to thank each Soldier for his service. The mission of Let's Say Thanks is to provide a way for individuals across the country to recognize U.S. troops stationed overseas by submitting a message through the Let's Say Thanks website, you have the opportunity to send a free personalized postcard to deployed Servicemembers. "Let's Say Thanks" has a variety of free cards to choose from and Xerox will print the cards at no cost to the participant. The cards will then be sent to Soldiers that are currently serving in Iraq. To participate in this endeavor to serve and thank our Soldiers please, go to: <http://www.letssaythanks.com>

## **Military offers college tuition aid to spouses**

The Department of Defense Military Spouse Career Advancement Account, or myCAA, funds a program for spouses pursuing "portable careers." Portable careers – such as business administration, education or health services- are flexible in nature and can be performed just about anywhere Soldiers and their Families are stationed. Military spouses of active-duty or active reserve members can apply for up to \$6,000 for college tuition. To find more information, go to

<http://www.myarmyonesource.com/News/2009/09SpouseTuition>

## **Tutors Available 24/7**

The Army has contracted with Tutor.com Learning Suite to provide military learners of all ages with additional educational support. The on-line tutoring program offers high quality, vetted subject matter resources, and educational support for military Families. The program is open and tutors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Because it is web based, users have access worldwide from any internet-connected PC or MAC computer. The Army program is provided by Child, Youth & School Services and is available at <http://www.myarmyonesource.com/News/2009/09/CYSSSTutor>.

Active, Wounded, Reserve Component, National Guard, Army civilians, Survivors and their dependents are eligible. For further information, go to:  
<http://www.myarmyonesource.com/News/2009/09/Tutor>



The Secretary of Defense initiated the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program which provides information, services, referral, and proactive outreach programs to Soldiers of the Army Reserve and their Families through all phases of the deployment cycle.

The goal of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is to prepare Soldiers and Families for mobilization, sustain Families during mobilization, and reintegrate Soldiers with their Families, communities, and employers upon redeployment or REFRAD.

The program includes information on current benefits and resources available to help overcome the challenges of reintegration. The 30, 60, and 90-day post-deployment or REFRAD requirements are for reintegration purposes only and are performed in Annual Training (AT) status for Soldiers. Family members are authorized to travel on Invitational Travel Orders (ITOs).

- You may preview the [Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Download Material](#).
- View the scheduled [Post-Deployment Events](#)
- View Event Description Key Below

Region Notice

**\*\*\*\*By command of USARC HQ - Well Being Office - Family Programs Manager: Soldiers/Family Members must attend Yellow Ribbon events within their Region\*\*\*\***

(If you do not select an event in your region, you may be denied to attend the event in which you have registered and be contacted with information about an event within your region. You will then be required to re-register for a separate event.)

[To register for an event:](#)

▪

## **2010 Scholarship for Military Children Program Opened November 3, 2009**

Scholarship applications are now available as of Nov. 3, 2009 in commissaries worldwide and online through a link at <https://www.commissaries.com> and directly at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. Since the program began in 2000, it has awarded \$7.3 million in scholarships to almost 5,000 children of Servicemembers. Only dependent, unmarried children, younger than age 21 (age 23 if enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university) of active duty personnel, Reserve, Guard and retired military members, survivors of Servicemembers may apply for a scholarship. Eligibility is determined using DEERS, the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. The applicant must be planning to attend, or already be attending, an accredited college or university full time in the fall of 2010, or be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program. Applicants should prepare to submit an essay on the following topic: "You can travel back in time; however, you cannot change events. What point in history would you visit and why?" Applications must be turned in to a commissary by close of business Feb. 17, 2010. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants. To find out more information, go to [http://www.commissaries.com/press\\_room/press\\_release/2009/DeCA\\_102\\_09.cfm](http://www.commissaries.com/press_room/press_release/2009/DeCA_102_09.cfm)

**Military Pay Update:** President Obama signed the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act which includes a 3.4 percent pay increase for all service members. This raise is 5 percent lower than the 2009 military pay increase. However, considering current economic conditions this may prove to be a generous increase when compared to the civilian wage rates.

The 2010 military pay increase will go into effect on January 1, 2010 and will be reflected by the mid-January pay date.

Take a look at the 2010 Military Pay Raises:

## **Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay - Apply For Retro Stop-Loss Payments Now**

Soldiers, veterans and survivors of those whose service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between September 11, 2001 and September 30, 2008 can apply to receive \$500 for every month, or portion of a month, they served under Stop Loss. The 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act established and largely funded the payment for all military services, but dictated that each service process and pay their own applicants. The Army estimates that 136,000 of the approximately 174,000 eligible service members served in the Army.

[http://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2009/10/20/?s\\_cid=email](http://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2009/10/20/?s_cid=email)

## **Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) have founded a national suicide prevention hotline to ensure veterans in emotional crisis have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. To operate the Veterans Hotline, the VA partnered with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Veterans can call the Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and press "1" to be routed to the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline. For more information, please go to: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/veterans/>

## **Holiday Mailing Deadlines**

The Christmas holiday mailing deadlines are now available on the Military Postal Service Agency website. Express Mail Military Service is available to selected military post offices. Check with your local post office to determine if this service is available to your APO/FPO address. PAL is a service that provided air transportation for parcels on a space-available basis. SAM parcels are paid at parcel post postage rate with maximum weight and size limits of 15 pounds and 60 inches in length and girth combined. For more information, contact your local post office.

[Http://www.military.com/military-report/holiday-mailing-deadlines?ESRC=miltrep.nl](http://www.military.com/military-report/holiday-mailing-deadlines?ESRC=miltrep.nl)

## **US VA Emergency Education Benefit Advance Payments for Veterans Secretary Shinseki Orders Emergency Checks to Students Awaiting Education Benefits**

Thousands of Checks to Alleviate Student Financial Burden

WASHINGTON - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has authorized checks for up to \$3,000 to be given to students who have applied for educational benefits and who have not yet received their government payment. The checks will be distributed to eligible students at VA regional benefits offices across the country starting Oct. 2, 2009.

Students should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties; Secretary Shinseki said. Education creates life-expanding opportunities for our Veterans.

Starting Friday, Oct. 2, 2009, students can go to one of VA 57 regional benefit offices with a photo ID and a course schedule to request advance payment of their education benefits. Because not all these offices are located near students, VA expects to send representatives to schools with large Veteran-student bodies and work with Veteran Service Organizations to help students with transportation needs.

A list of those VA regional offices is available at

[www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp](http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp). asking our people to get out their road maps and determine how we can reach the largest number of college students who can reach us. VA Under Secretary for Benefits Patrick Dunne said. Not everyone has a car. Not everyone can walk to a VA benefits office



Although VA does not know how many students will request emergency funds, it has approximately 25,000 claims pending that may result in payments to students.

The funds VA will give to students now are advance payments of the earned benefits for education benefits. This money will be deducted from future education payments.

VA officials said students should know that after this special payment, they can expect to receive education payments on the normal schedule -- the beginning of the month following the period for which they are reimbursed.

This is an extraordinary action we taking said Shinseki.. But it necessary because we recognize the hardships some of our Veterans face.

More than 27,500 students have already received benefits for housing or books under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, or their schools received their tuition payments.

1-888-LinkVet (1-888-546-5838)

[www.mdva.state.mn.us](http://www.mdva.state.mn.us) [www.mvh.state.mn.us](http://www.mvh.state.mn.us) [www.minnesotaveteran.org](http://www.minnesotaveteran.org)

### **M- Gold Star License Plate**

Governor Pawlenty signed legislation authorizing the Gold Star Plate on May 16, 2009. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, Minnesota Department of Public Safety and representatives from Gold Star families worked together to design the plate.

The Gold Star concept began during World War I when British mother Grace Darling Siebold began wearing a gold star following the death of her son in aerial combat. The Gold Star Mothers' Coalition was born of her simple act, and the single gold star became a recognizable symbol for those grieving a child lost in military service. Gold Star license plates are available in more than 40 states.

Applications for Gold Star Plates can be made by U.S. mail or at any Minnesota Driver and Vehicle Services deputy registrar office. For an application form or an office location, visit [www.mndriveinfo.org](http://www.mndriveinfo.org). Vehicles are subject to standard registration fees, but there will be no additional charge for the Gold Star Plates or for replacement, should they become damaged. Applicants will be required to provide documentation of eligibility.

[www.mndriveinfo.org](http://www.mndriveinfo.org).

### **M- Wilderness Inquiry – Healing Adventures**

Who is eligible: Iraq & Afghanistan war veterans with spinal cord injury and their family members.

Wilderness Inquiry (WI) is a Minnesota-based non-profit organization with more than 30 years experience providing outdoor adventure experiences for individuals with disabilities with their families. Trips include kayaking in the Apostle Islands, canoeing in Yellowstone National Park, and many more opportunities.

Wilderness Inquiry has a long history of working collaboratively with veterans and their families with spinal cord injuries and their family members to participate together in a

wilderness adventure. Because of Christopher & Dana Reeve Paralysis Foundation has provided funding for this program, we are able to offer a wide-range of wilderness trips for a cost of \$10 to \$225 per person.

For more information on this program and how or your veterans' organization can take advantage of this opportunity, please contact Greta Arnquist at 612-676-9424 or email at [gretaarnquist@wildernessinquiry.org](mailto:gretaarnquist@wildernessinquiry.org)

[www.wildernessinquiry.org](http://www.wildernessinquiry.org)

### **National Resource Directory Web Site:**

Online Tool for Wounded Warriors, Families Provides Access to Thousands of Services and Resources

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is an online tool for wounded, ill and injured servicemembers, veterans, their families and those who support them. It provides access to more than 11,000 services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration.

The NRD is a collaborative partnership among the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs. The information contained within the NRD is from federal, state and local governmental agencies; veterans service and benefit organizations; non-profit and community-based organizations; academic institutions and professional associations who provide assistance to wounded warriors and their families.

[Wounded Warrior Resource Center: 1-800-342-9647](http://www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.org)

### **Real Warriors Campaign Launches Message Board**

The Real Warriors Campaign is pleased to announce that its newest resource, the Real Warriors Message Board, is now live on their web site, <http://realwarriors.net/forum/>. Servicemembers, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, veterans, military families, and healthcare professional are encouraged to use the campaign's message boards to connect with one another and share news, information, and insights on psychological health concerns and traumatic brain injury. For more information about the campaign and their most recent efforts as well as to join the Real Warriors Campaign Network to receive monthly updates about the campaign, please go to <http://www.realwarriors.net/listserv>.



## **Post Traumatic Stress Support Group**

A community of patients, family members and friends dedicated to dealing with Post Traumatic Stress, together.

### **Online Support Groups for your Health Challenges**

MDJunction is an active center for [Online Support Groups](#), a place where thousands of patients meet every day to discuss their feelings, questions and hopes with like minded friends. [Join us for free.](#)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may come on silently. It is a very progressive illness that becomes more severe year after year if left untreated. It will eventually consume those victims who have experienced trauma beyond what their minds are able to comprehend or deal with at one time

[mdjunction.com/post-traumatic-stress](http://mdjunction.com/post-traumatic-stress)

### **An Update on the Post-9/11 GI Bill: Good Things to Know**

The Post-9/11 GI Bill has been in effect since August 1, 2009 and the interest among Soldiers and family members has been very high. Eligible Soldiers can use the benefit for themselves or transfer the benefit to their spouses or children. Soldiers and spouses who use the benefit while the Soldier is still on active duty will enjoy full payment of all their undergraduate or graduate courses and fees. For all others, up to 36 months of benefits will be paid based on a sliding scale linked to the Soldier's qualifying active-duty service since September 9, 2001. For more information and to apply for your Post- 9/11 GI Bill benefits, go to Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill Web site. To transfer benefits to your spouse or dependent children, go to Transfer of Education Benefits Web site.

### **In-state Tuition for Service members and Their Families**

After July 1, 2009, members of the armed forces on active duty for a period of more than 30 days and their families will be eligible to receive in-state tuition at public colleges and universities in the state where they reside or are permanently stationed. Once a Servicemember or their family members are enrolled and paying in-state tuition, they will continue to pay the in-state tuition rate as long as they remain continuously enrolled at the institution, even if the Servicemember is reassigned outside the state. The Higher Education Opportunity Act (H. R. 4137) (HEOA) was signed into law on August 14, 2008 and amends and extends the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). To read the full article, go here: <http://cs.mhf.dod.mil/content/dav/mhf/QOL-Library/MHF/252863.html>

### **Organization Helps Military Widows**

With an emphasis on healing through sharing stories, tears and laughter, the American Widow Project (AWP) a non-profit organization is dedicated to military widows, has produced a 75-minute documentary film that gives a candid look into the stories, struggles and perseverance of six military widows. The film is distributed free-of-charge

to all military widows and widowers as a key to the healing process. For more information, please visit: <http://americanwidowproject.org/> or call 1-800-AWP-Widow.

**M - Free transit - for Minnesota's disabled Veterans MDVA newest benefits in the state for disabled Veterans**

– The MDVA announces free transit. for Minnesota's disabled Veterans is now able to use public transportation throughout parts of Minnesota at no charge. Disabled Veterans simply show their Veteran Identification Card (VIC), issued by the VA Medical Center, to bus operators of any fixed-route services in the Minneapolis/ St. Paul area. This benefit is also available on regular-route services in Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester, Moorhead, East Grand Forks and Mankato. The VIC must contain the designation "Service Connected, or S.C." If you are a disabled Veteran and do not have a VIC card, this is a great reason to visit the nearest VA Medical Center and get enrolled.

**M - New Driver License Option for Minnesota Veterans**

Effective August 1 Minnesota Veterans may elect to have "Veteran" listed on their Minnesota drivers license or identification card at the time of renewal or reissue. To take advantage of this option, Veterans must pay the required license or I.D. card fee, check a box on the application stating they are a Veteran, and provide a certified copy of their discharge papers (DD214). The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services will attach a copy of the DD214 to the application and maintain an electronic record. At any time Veterans may request, in writing, to have their name removed from the list. This information is classified as private data, with the exception that it can be made available to the Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of administering Veterans benefits.

**Army Reserve Family Programs Outreach & Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week**

This operation provides support and assistance to the Family members of Army Reserve Soldiers by connecting them to available resources and services. For additional information and or questions please call 1-866-345-8248  
<http://www.arfp.org>

Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance: helping heroes in times of need

Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) provides financial support to traumatically injured Soldiers and their Families. Qualifying Soldiers receive a tax-free payment between \$25,000 and \$100,000 per traumatic event based on the injury. The TSGLI benefit is not intended to serve as income replacement and will not affect other compensation determinations.

Traumatic injuries covered by TSGLI are defined as severe trauma from an external force that is physical in nature. Examples include: loss of sight, paralysis, limb salvage, facial reconstruction, severe burns or loss of activities of daily living (ADL) functions due to traumatic brain injuries or other traumatic injuries, which focus on the Soldier's need for assistance.

TSGLI is a congressionally mandated program that began on Dec. 1, 2005. All Soldiers from that point forward who elected Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) pay an additional \$1 for TSGLI, no matter what the level of SGLI coverage. In addition, Soldiers who incurred qualifying traumatic injuries from Oct. 7, 2001, through Nov. 30, 2005, while on orders overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) or in a combat zone are covered retroactively by TSGLI, regardless of whether they had SGLI at the time of their injury.

### **Transferring Your GI Bill: Quirks and Process**

Users of the Post-9/11 GI Bill will find a quirk in how Congress designed one of its most popular features: the option to transfer benefits to family members. For example, spouses of active duty members who hope to use transferred benefits to attend private colleges will be delighted at the value of the benefit for them. It will cover full tuition and fees, with no ceiling, and therefore will be worth far more than benefits transferable to college-bound children or even benefits available to veterans using the full plan themselves. On the other hand, active duty spouses who use transferred benefits to attend public colleges or universities will have a more modest education package than other GI Bill users including eligible children because active duty spouses will not qualify for the GI Bill's monthly living allowance or the annual stipend for books and supplies. To read the full article by Tom Philpot go to:

<http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,193477,00.html?wh=news> All applications to transfer benefits will be made through the Transferability of Educational Benefit (TEB) website. For more information on eligibility and application procedures, see the Department of Veterans' Affairs web site at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

### **Partnership Opens Door for Army Reserve, Guard Construction Jobs**

Helmets to Hardhats, a national program that connects National Guard, Reserve and transitioning active duty members with career training and employment within 15 building and construction trades unions and nine leading construction and contractor associations, officially joined the Army Reserves' Employer Partnership Initiative during a Pentagon signing ceremony on July 2, 2009. The arrangement will open the door for the Army Guard and Reserve to share the same talent pool with about 80,000 civilian employers in the construction industry. To read this article in full, please go to the following link: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=55001>

### **eKnowledge Corporation Donates \$25 Million of FREE SAT/ACT Test Prep Software to Military**

Over the past three years, eKnowledge has donated over \$25 million of Free SAT/ACT software to America's military families and because of their generous donation has received tens of thousands of thank you letters and testimonials from grateful recipients.

To read this article, and the testimonials, or to order software, please visit:  
<http://www.eknowledge.com/military>

### **M - Flood and Storm Relief Funding Available for Veterans and Families**

As a result of severe spring flooding in parts of the state, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is offering Flood and Severe Storm Relief Assistance through the month of July to Veterans and their families in the following counties: Becker, Beltrami, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Cook, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin and Yellow Medicine.

A single Veteran or surviving spouse of a Veteran is eligible for reimbursement assistance funds of up to \$300. If the Veteran is married or has at least one dependent child, or if the surviving spouse has at least one dependent child, he or she will be eligible for a reimbursement of up to \$600.

Applications for this program must be made through the respective County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). For CVSO contact information, visit [www.minnesotaveteran.org](http://www.minnesotaveteran.org) or call 1-888-LINKVET (546-5838). All eligible receipts must be dated between March 20, 2009 and June 30, 2009. Applications must be postmarked by July 31, 2009. However, due to limited funding, Flood and Severe Storm Relief Assistance Funding will end July 31 or earlier if the funds are exhausted before that time.

### **VA Program Aims to Help Homeless Vets**

The Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have partnered to provide housing and assistance to an estimated 10,000 homeless veterans. The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program is funded with \$75 million allocated to public housing authorities, allowing local officials to give out about 10,000 rental assistance vouchers specifically to homeless veterans in their communities. The housing authorities, who administer HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8), will work closely with local VA medical centers to manage the program. The medical center will also provide case managers to eligible veterans. To read more, please follow the link:

[http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/06/military\\_homeless\\_veterans\\_061809w/ers](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/06/military_homeless_veterans_061809w/ers)







[What's New](#)

- [1st Quarter Participant Statements Have Been Mailed and Are Online](#)
- [The 2008 TSP Participant Survey Results](#)
- [Forms 1099-R Have Been Mailed and Are Online](#)
- [New Law Affecting 2009 Required Minimum Distributions](#)
- [Qs and As on TSP Contribution Rules for 2009](#)



[Calculators](#)



[Lifecycle Funds](#)



[Account Access](#)



[Returns, Share Prices, & Fund Sheets](#)

[TSP Features](#)  
[Forms & Publications](#)  
[Info for TSP Representatives](#)  
[Get E-mail Updates](#)  
[Special Interests](#)

Civilian

Uniformed Services



[Participant Statements & Highlights](#)

The TSP is a retirement savings plan for civilians who are employed by the United States Government and members of the uniformed services. [The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board](#), administers the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The Web site <http://www.frtib.gov>, provides information about the FRTIB electronic reading room, procurements, and employment opportunities.

### **Employment Pilot Matches Employers and Veterans with TBI and/or PTSD**

An Employment Pilot program is being implemented in Washington, D.C. to assist veterans with TBI or PTSD. The goal of the pilot is to help coordinate successful employment experiences for these veterans. Department of Labor (DOL) is managing this "learning lab" concept with support from others. Through the Pilot, DOL will study, validate and disseminate best practices related to helping employees with TBI and/or PTSD succeed on the job. Workforce development professionals on the team will consult with organizations interested in employing veterans with TBI/PTSD, to match them with qualified veteran workers, provide ongoing support; and monitor experiences and track best practices. For more information, visit the America's Heroes at Work web site: <http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/employipilot.html>

### **Targeting Youth, Military Health system adds Social Networking Tools**

The Military Health System (MHS) has added social networking tools including Twitter, MySpace and YouTube in a push to engage the 18-24 year olds who make up a large portion of the more than 1.4 million troops on active duty. MHS' health site is a spiffy, easy-to-use portal that provides news and text-based information. To read more about this article, please visit: [http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng\\_20090608\\_8178.php](http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20090608_8178.php)

### **Army Reserve Enrichment Camps (AREC)**

Army Reserve Enrichment Camps provide opportunities for campers to interact with other Army Reserve connected youth. Young people learn about the unique factors associated with being an Army Reserve family member and most of all, have fun! To read more, please visit <http://www.arfp.org/skins/arfp/home.aspx?mode=user>

### **Soldiers Can Find Housing Online**

The Automated Housing Referral Network (AHRN) is a Department of Defense (DoD) sponsored Web site that directs Servicemembers preparing for a permanent change of station (PCS) to housing vacancies in the vicinity of their new duty station. For more information about the free AHRN web site for both Soldiers and landlords as well as read more about this article, please visit: <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/06/18/22938-soldiers-can-find-housing-online/?ref=news-arnews-title3>

### **Department of Defense (DoD) Transferability Options for "Post 9/11 GI Bill"**

Career Servicemembers on active duty or in the selected reserve on Aug. 1, 2009, and who are eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill may be entitled to transfer all or a portion of their education entitlement to one or more family members. To be eligible, Servicemembers must have served in the Armed Forces for at least six years, and agree to serve four additional years, from the date of election to transfer. Beginning June 29, 2009, eligible Servicemembers may make transfer designations by visiting: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB>. The full transferability policy is available here: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/DTM%2009-003%20Post%209-11%20GI%20Bill.pdf>

To read this article in full please click on the following link:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12762>

### **M - Twin Cities Honor Flight**

**On Saturday, November 7, 2009, the Twin Cities Honor Flight** will be sponsoring another flight for 100 Minnesota World War II Veterans from the metro area. Veterans within a 40-mile radius of the Minneapolis/St Paul Airport may apply for an application. **The Veterans and Guardians on this one-day excursion, will leave the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport from the Hubert Humphrey Charter Terminal on Sun Country Airlines at 6:15 AM and return at 10:40 PM.** A Large Homecoming Party will be waiting for them when they return to the Hubert Humphrey Terminal.

To assist Disabled Veterans, the Twin Cities Honor Flight provides oxygen, wheelchairs and scooters as needed. The flights, deluxe tour bus service, tee shirts, scooters, wheelchairs, oxygen, meals and other amenities are provided free of charge to World War II Veterans.

There will be 56 Trained Guardians to escort the 100 Veterans on the aircraft and accompany them throughout the day. The guardians pay their own way for the trip. The WWII Heroes go for FREE. They have paid enough.

**Twin Cities Honor Flight**  
**ATTN: Jerry Kyser**  
**2674 Mackubin Street**  
**Roseville, MN 55113**  
Home/Office: 651-481-8835  
Cell: 651-338-2717

**HONOR FLIGHTS National**  
**Website: [www.HonorFlight.org](http://www.HonorFlight.org)**  
**937-521-2400**

We have the Nov 2009, May 2010 and Oct 2010 Flights filled with WWII Veterans who are eager to go. **However, we need 56 Guardians for the May and October 2010 Honor Flights.**

The Twin Cities Honor Flight is under the shared 501c (3) Non-Profit umbrella of the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity.

### **Expanded Education Benefits for Children of Fallen Soldiers**

The policy regarding the education of the dependents of fallen Soldiers has been expanded. The new policy allows currently-enrolled students in Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) who are dependents of fallen Soldiers to continue in DDESS schools without limitation, regardless of their physical residence or upcoming school transition points. The policy change is effective immediately.

The prior policy allowed currently-enrolled DDESS students who were dependents of fallen Soldiers to continue in DDESS schools until the end of the school year without any special permission. It allowed for students to stay in the DDESS school until they would normally transition to another school level - i.e. elementary school to middle school or middle school to high school.

After reflecting on the previous policy and with input from families and commanders, DoDEA reevaluated the policy. Continued enrollment now only requires a one-time parental request to the respective school. Yearly registration is required and students will need to meet all other requirements for enrollment. The student's family will have to assume responsibility for transportation.

The Army doesn't leave Soldiers behind on the battlefield; nor will the Army leave their families behind. The Army is committed to ensuring excellence in schools and expanding education opportunities. This commitment extends to school-aged family members of

fallen Soldiers. The Army recognizes the commitment and increasing sacrifices that families are making every day. The Army recognizes the strength of Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families. Thus, the Army is committed to providing Soldiers and families a quality of life commensurate with their service and sacrifice.

**SUBJECT: MILITARY ONESOURCE CRISIS LINE / THE DEFENSE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (DCOE) OUTREACH CENTER - ALARACT 153/2009**

1. THE ARMY REMAINS COMMITTED TO MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY RESOURCE TO OPTIMIZE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF ITS SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS, AND FAMILIES. THE MILITARY ONESOURCE CRISIS INTERVENTION HOTLINE IS A FREE PHONE AND ONLINE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR ACTIVE-DUTY, GUARD, AND RESERVE SERVICE MEMBERS (INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE MEMBERS) AND THEIR FAMILIES.
2. CREDENTIALLED CONSULTANTS OFFER SUPPORT AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK / 365 DAYS A YEAR THROUGH PHONE OR ONLINE CONSULTATION. THE CONSULTANTS WILL ASSESS THE CALLER'S NEEDS AND PROVIDE A REFERRAL TO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS THAT CAN PROVIDE FACE-TO-FACE FOLLOW-UP COUNSELING.
3. CURRENTLY, SOLDIERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN BE PROVIDED UP TO 12 FREE, FACE-TO-FACE, SHORT TERM COUNSELING SESSIONS.
4. MILITARY ONESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION:  
  
FROM THE U.S.: 1-800-342-9647  
  
OUTSIDE THE U.S.: (COUNTRY ACCESS CODE) 800-342-9647 (DIAL ALL 11 NUMBERS) OR CALL COLLECT FROM OUTSIDE THE U.S.: 484-530-5908  
  
TTY/TTD: 800-346-9188 (HEARING IMPAIRED)  
  
EN ESPANOL, LLAME AL 1-877-888-0727

[HTTP://WWW.MILITARYONESOURCE.COM](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

5. THE DEFENSE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (DCOE) OUTREACH CENTER HELP LINE IS ALSO AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK / 365 DAYS A YEAR. THIS HELP LINE IS STAFFED BY CONSULTANTS WHO CAN SERVE AS AN AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY ISSUES. THIS OUTREACH CENTER ASSISTS SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES GATHER INFORMATION AND CONNECT WITH THE AGENCIES NEEDED TO PROMOTE RESILIENCE, RECOVERY, AND REINTEGRATION. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: 1-866-966-1020 OR [HTTP://WWW.DCOE.HEALTH.MIL/RESOURCES.ASPX](http://www.dcoe.health.mil/resources.aspx).

6. THE ARMY MUST GIVE OUR SOLDIERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME AWARE OF THE MULTITUDE OF RESOURCES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM. PROMOTING THE MILITARY ONESOURCE CRISIS INTERVENTION NUMBER AND THE DCOE OUTREACH CENTER HELP LINE ARE TWO WAYS THAT LEADERS CAN REINFORCE THE ARMY'S COMMITMENT TO BUILDING RESILIENCE, POSITIVE LIFE COPING SKILLS, AND WELL BEING FOR OUR SOLDIERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS.

7. HQDA POC FOR THIS MESSAGE IS [G1SUICIDE@CONUS.ARMY.MIL](mailto:G1SUICIDE@CONUS.ARMY.MIL). IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS PLEASE GO TO THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.ARMYG1.ARMY.MIL/HR/SUICIDE/DEFAULT.ASP](http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/default.asp)

INFORMATION ON DCOE OUTREACH CENTER CAN BE OBTAINED BY VISITING

[HTTP://WWW.DCOE.HEALTH.MIL/DEFAULT.ASPX](http://www.dcoe.health.mil/default.aspx) WEBSITE.

8. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR, ARMY SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE.

## **VA Welcoming Vets Home with New Web Site, Blog**

WASHINGTON (April 20, 2009) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched its new "Returning Veterans" Web site -- [www.oefoif.va.gov](http://www.oefoif.va.gov) -- to welcome home Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts with a social, Veteran-centric Web site focusing on their needs and questions.

"VA is entering the world of Web 2.0, because that's where this generation of Veterans is already communicating," said Dr. Gerald M. Cross, VA's Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Health. "We're opening our doors to them virtually to let them know what they can expect when they step through our doors in reality."

The Web site will feature videos, Veteran stories, and a blog where Veterans are encouraged to post feedback. The site also will restructure the traditional index-of-benefits format found on other VA pages into question-based, categorized, and easily navigated links by topic. This will allow Veterans to find benefits of interest easily and discover related benefits as they explore.

"We hope our returning Veterans find this site easy and helpful, but also engaging," Dr. Cross said. "As the site grows, we will be linking to Veterans' blogs and highlighting more of their own stories from their own views. We are their VA, so we are eager to provide a forum for Veterans to discuss their lives."

[www.oefoif.va.gov](http://www.oefoif.va.gov)

## **Social Security for Wounded Warriors**

Wounded Warriors may now be eligible for Social Security Benefits. The Social Security Administration (SSA) established an expedited claims process for Servicemembers who were disabled on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurred. To read this article visit <http://www.military.com/military-report/social-security-for-wounded-warriors> and to find out more about Social Security and Servicemembers visit the Social Security Administration's Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors/>

<http://www.military.com/military-report/social-security-for-wounded-warriors>

## **Military Order of the Purple Heart Launches New Website**

VetsJobs.net is a new website launched by the Military Order of the Purple Heart to help veterans in obtaining federal employment. <http://www.VetsJobs.net> offers links to USAJOBS, the Department of Labor (DOL) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as well as a video, "How to Get a Federal Job," that walks veterans through the process in applying for federal employment opportunities. For more information, visit <http://www.VetsJobs.net>.



## **New Guide to Getting Credit for Service**

The American Council on Education (ACE) released a new publication titled: “A Transfer Guide: Understanding Your Military Transcript and ACE Credit Recommendations.”

This publication outlines the factors on how academic credit can be awarded by institutions of higher education through military training and occupational experiences. To understand institutional transfer policies and procedures and start the transcript review process early, please visit the ACE website at: <http://www.acenet.edu/militaryprograms>.

## **M - Minnesota Tax Breaks for Military Members and Veterans**

April is tax month. For some Americans, tax laws on both the state and federal level allow for credits and exemptions that lower the amount they are required to pay.

Minnesota’s military members and Veterans are among those entitled to certain tax credits and exemptions.

A new tax law authorizes Minnesota residents who are members of the National Guard or Reservists to subtract federal active duty military pay and out-of-state training pay from their individual income taxes.

Since 2005, Minnesota’s National Guard and Reserve members have been allowed to subtract pay received for certain types of active service, including natural disaster emergency response, missing person searches, airport security duty and active duty for special work (ADSW). These benefits are subject to residency requirements.

Another tax benefit enacted by the 2006 Legislature applies to military members and Veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001. Eligible individuals can receive a tax credit of \$59 for each month of service performed on or after September 11, 2001. In order to qualify, the service must have taken place in a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty zone. Combat zones are defined as areas in which the U.S. Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat. They are designated by an Executive Order from the President. To apply for the credit, you must include a copy of either a DD214 or Leave and Earnings Statement.

Certain Veterans and military members are also eligible for property tax benefits.

Legislation passed in 2006 made military members who are absent from Minnesota for active duty eligible for the homestead classification on acquired property even if the property has not been occupied. Upon return from service, the military member must notify the county assessor and will be granted abatement for the difference between non-homestead and homestead taxes for the current year and the preceding two years. In addition, Minnesota residents who are in the military may qualify for a property tax refund. Applications for the refund must include any nontaxable income, such as combat or hazardous duty pay, as household income.

Beginning in 2008, legislation grants disabled Veterans annual exclusions from property taxes. To qualify, Veterans must be honorably discharged and have a service-connected disability. Veterans with a 70 percent disability rating or higher are eligible for a market value exclusion of \$150,000, while those who are totally and permanently disabled are eligible for a \$300,000 exclusion.

For more details on these and other tax laws visit the Minnesota Department of Revenue call (651)296-3781 or 1-800-652-9094. [www.taxes.state.mn.us](http://www.taxes.state.mn.us)

## **M – Warrior to Citizen Free Health Clinics**

### **Pro-bono alternative health care services**

As part of the Warrior to Citizen Campaign, [Northwestern Health Sciences University](#) and the [Adler Graduate School](#) have partnered to provide pro-bono health care services to Minnesota military personnel and their families, including chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage, psychological therapy, and family counseling. The services are provided by senior interns supervised by faculty clinicians. Dozens of veterans and spouses have been seen in over 400 clinic visits and report a very positive experience. For more information, contact the clinics below:

- **De Rusha Clinical Education Center**  
2501 W. 84th St., Bloomington, MN; 952-885-5415 (chiropractic, psychological counseling, family counseling)
- [Edith Davis Teaching Clinic](#)  
2501 W. 84th St., Bloomington, MN; 952-885-5450 (acupuncture, oriental medicine)
- [Burnsville Natural Care Center](#)  
12445 River Ridge Blvd., Burnsville, MN; 952-894-7620 (massage therapy)
- For further information or questions about where to be treated call 952-885-5415



## **M - Homes for Heroes**

Formed in 2002, following the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and bolstered by a shared admiration for the “heroes” employed as firefighters, emergency medical technicians, law enforcement officers and military personnel, a group of Minnesota real estate-related business owners created an innovative network called Homes for Heroes™. We offer considerable savings to heroes when they buy or sell a home. Later, the program was expanded to serve even more workforce heroes, including teachers, health care workers, military personnel, and other every day heroes who provide quality services to the public every day.

The savings you will receive using the Homes for Heroes program:

**25%** of the gross commission paid to your Homes for Heroes Real Estate Affiliate’s Company, whether you buy or sell

**No more than ½%** Loan Origination fee on Purchases or Refinances with HFH preferred Lender

**Discounted** Closing fee with HFH preferred Closing Company in states where allowed.

**Discounted** Home Inspection with HFH preferred Home Inspection Company

Sign up and save

If you plan to buy or sell a home visit the Web site to request a call from one of the Home for Heroes Affiliates. They want to save you money.

Toll free (866) 4-heroes/ (866) 443-7637 / local: 763-412-1272

Homes For Heroes, Inc.

Pointe North Plaza

3495 Northdale Boulevard NW

Suite 200

Minneapolis, MN 55448

[www.homeforheroes.com](http://www.homeforheroes.com)

### **Free Tax Consultation and E-Filing Through Military OneSource**

Military OneSource is offering free online tax preparation for federal and state taxes, as well as tax consultation services. Visit their website at

<http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com>.

### **Free Annual Credit Report**

The nationwide consumer reporting companies—Equifax, Experian and TransUnion—are required to provide a free copy of your credit report through the Fair Credit Reporting Act. The only website that offers the free credit report is

<http://www.annualcreditreport.com>. Annualcreditreport.com will never send you an email solicitation for your free credit report, use pop-up ads or call you to ask for personal information. To learn more on how to obtain your free credit report please visit <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt156.shtm>.

### **New Dental Rates for Reserve Component**

New dental rates for National Guard and Reserve members and their families took effect as of February 1, 2009 and will be in affect until January 31, 2010. For complete benefits and cost-share percentages, please visit the United Concordia Website at

<http://www.tricaredentalprogram.com/>

### **2009 American Patriot Freedom Scholarship**

Applications for the 2009 American Patriot Freedom Scholarship are being accepted until April 24, 2009. The scholarship program provides financial assistance towards the education of military children. Visit Home Front America's website for eligibility information and applications at <http://www.homefrontamerica.org/oohrahhome.htm>.

### **New DoD Center to Help with Psychological Health & TBI**

The Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is now available 24-hours a day to provide information and referrals to

military Servicemembers, veterans, and their families. The center is staffed with health resource consultants and nurses. The center can deal with everything from routine requests for information to questions about symptoms and finding appropriate health care resources. The center can be reached by phone at 866-966-1020 or by email at [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org). For more information please read the article at [http://www.tricare.mil/Pressroom/news\\_print.aspx?fid=503](http://www.tricare.mil/Pressroom/news_print.aspx?fid=503)

### **AAFES Market Basket Survey—Results are In!**

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service saves authorized shoppers an average of 20.38 percent compared to other retailers, a result found from an exhaustive Market Basket Survey conducted in October of last year. More than 300 products were compared item by item. In addition to the national survey, each major AAFES Exchange location conducts local price surveys monthly to ensure AAFES pricing is consistently competitive. To learn more results from the survey such as savings by department or savings by market (location) visit <http://www.aafes.com/docs/valuestory.htm>.

### **Disney Parks Celebrate U.S. Military With Free, Multi-day Admission to Theme Parks in 2009**

Celebrate the military with Disney theme parks in 2009!

#### **At the Disneyland Resort in Southern California:**

Through June 12, 2009, each active or retired member of the U.S. military can receive one complimentary threeday “Disney’s Armed Forces Salute” Park Hopper ticket valid for admission to both Disneyland and Disney’s California

Adventure parks. During the offer period, active or retired U.S. military personnel also may make a one-time purchase of an adult or child three-day “Disney’s Armed Forces Salute Companion” Park Hopper ticket for up to five family members (including spouse) or friends for the price of an adult 1-Day Park Hopper ticket. Disneyland Resort hotels are also offering special room rates for active or retired military personnel. For example, at Disney’s Paradise Pier Hotel, active or retired members of the military and their families may find hotel rooms starting at \$119 per night during value season, with great savings during other times of the offer period. This offer

is available through June 12, 2009, and the number of rooms available at these special rates is limited. For information regarding “Disney’s Armed Forces Salute” at the Disneyland Resort, or to make reservations, military personnel may call (714)956-6424.

#### **At Walt Disney World Resort in Florida:**

Through Dec. 23, 2009, each active or retired member of the U.S. military may obtain one complimentary 5-day “Disney’s Armed Forces Salute” ticket with Park Hopper and Water Park Fun & More options. This ticket is valid for five days of admission into the four Walt Disney World theme parks, plus a total of five visits to a choice of a Disney water park, DisneyQuest Indoor Interactive Theme Park or certain other attractions. During this offer period, active or retired U.S. military personnel may also

make a one-time purchase of up to a maximum of five 5-Day “Disney’s Armed Forces Salute Companion” tickets (one theme park per day) for \$99 per ticket, plus tax, for family members (including spouse) or friends. Although this ticket for family members and friends does not include either the Park Hopper or Water Park Fun & More options, this ticket can be upgraded to add either such option, or both, for an additional \$25, plus tax, per option. All tickets and options are non-transferable and must be used by Dec. 23, 2009. Ask about the great rates that may be available at select Walt Disney World Resort hotels for active or retired U.S. military personnel during this offer period. For full offer details and restrictions, visit [www.disneyworld.com/military](http://www.disneyworld.com/military).

### **M – Minnesota’s County Veterans Service Officers**

The MDVA is happy to announce that we have assisted Minnesota’s County Veterans Service Officers in getting their association’s website up to date. Please visit [www.macvso.org](http://www.macvso.org) to find the latest information about the great group of veterans helping veterans located in every county in the state. [www.macvso.org](http://www.macvso.org)

### **M - Looking for a Job? (fall 2008 AARP MN)**

Whether you’ve recently lost your job or you’re a retiree looking to jump back into the daily grind, a wealth of online resources can help kick-start your search. Here are a few sites to check out:

[www.minnesotaworks.net](http://www.minnesotaworks.net) is a self-service system in which member employers and job seekers can find each other. There is no cost for membership. Job-seeking members can post up to five resumes to be searched by employers. Members can also search for jobs openings, contact employers by e-mail or apply on line.

[www.experienworks.org](http://www.experienworks.org) helps older, low-income Minnesotans prepare to re-enter the workforce and find job openings. Clients benefit from training, counseling and community service assignments before entering the workforce. Call 1-800-450-5627 to learn more.

[www.womenventure.org](http://www.womenventure.org) provides technical tools to help women in Minnesota start and grow a business, find a new job or develop a new career path. It provides consulting, coaching and training to women and men who need effective career management assistance. Owners of new or existing business with strong business plans can apply for loans ranging from \$500 to \$35,000.

### **Avoid Identity Theft**

Identity thieves can steal your money and ruin your credit rating. Learn how to protect your identity and minimize the damage if you’ve been victimized. The Federal Trade Commission’s Identity Theft Site provides information to help you defend against identity theft. It includes information for military personnel and their families on how to fight back against identity theft. For practical tips on guarding against Internet fraud and protecting you visit: [www.OnGuardOnline.gov](http://www.OnGuardOnline.gov)

**VA Expands protections for Veterans with missing paperwork.** Identity Theft For practical and tips on guarding against Internet fraud and protecting your personal visit <http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/identity-theft.aspx>  
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/index.html>

### **PX INNOVATION: AAFES**

recently launched a new means to obtain low-cost eyeglasses. In Aug 2008 AAFES began "FramesDirect for the US Military," a virtual optical shop on its online Exchange Mall. FramesDirect extends AAFES capacity to serve all Soldiers and family members. Check out AAFES online mall. Click the Exchange Mall logo or access the site directly by logging onto [www.exchangeonlinemall.com](http://www.exchangeonlinemall.com).

**WARRIOR CARE:** The Compensation," a succinct, easy-to-read benefits handbook, contains a myriad of information for seriously wounded, ill or injured Soldiers and their Families. The handbook was created to help Soldiers and their Family members navigate through the military and veteran disability, evaluation, compensation and benefits programs designed to help them. The departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, Health and Human Services and Education and the Social Security Administration, as well as other governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations, contributed to the handbook. Copies of the handbook have been mailed to WTUs and CBWTUs to distribute to WTs and their Families. They are also located online at:

[www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com](http://www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com)

The National Resource Directory is a web portal with over 11,000 programs for wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Family members, veterans, and Families of the fallen. It provides a full range of medical and non-medical services and resources needed for Soldiers to achieve their personal and professional goals during recovery, rehabilitation, and community integration. The directory is available at: [www.nationalresourcedirectory.org](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org)  
<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org>

### **Outreach Center Opens for Psychological Health and TBI**

The Department of Defense (DoD) announced the opening of a 24-hour outreach center to provide information and referrals to military Servicemembers, veterans, their families and others with questions about psychological health and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The new center is operated by the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and TBI. The DCoE Outreach Center can be accessed by calling 866-966-1020 or by email at [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org).

### **State Veteran Benefits**

Military.com has developed an online general summary of educational benefits for veterans and their dependents. View the full summary by state at <http://education.military.com/money-for-school/state-veteran-benefits>.



## **SAT/ACT PowerPrep Software Free for Military Families**

eKnowledge Corporation is offering free SAT/ACT PowerPrep software for Servicemembers, veterans and their families. To place your order please visit <https://eknowledge.com/military>.

## **Tax Statements are Coming**

Servicemembers, military retirees and annuitants and federal civilian employees with Defense Finance and Accounting Service's (DFAS) myPay accounts can expect to receive their 2008 tax statements up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery. MyPay users can also create restricted access PINs to allow family members and other trusted individuals to view and print tax statements. To learn more visit Military.com's Tax Center at <http://www.military.com/Finance/Taxes/0,13397,82,00.html>.

*\*\*Reminder: Military OneSource is offering free tax preparation on their website starting January 19. Visit <http://www.militaryonesource.com>*

## **Disney Parks Celebrate U.S. Military**

Walt Disney Resorts are offering free multi-day admissions to active duty and retired U.S. military personnel, along with active members of the U.S. Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserves. "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" allows for great rates at select Disney Resort hotels and discounted "companion tickets" for family and friends. For details and contact information please read the full press release. <http://www.prnewswire.com/mnr/disney/36573/>

## **Wounded Warrior Resource Center**

The Department of Defense announced the establishment of the Wounded Warrior Resource Center through Military OneSource. Assistance provided by the resource center will not replace the specialized wounded warrior programs established by each of the military services, but offers an alternative resource for assistance. Specially trained consultants will ensure consistent, quality customer services. The resource center consultant will maintain communication with the caller until the issue or concern is resolved. Servicemembers and their families can call 1-800-342-9647 or email their questions or concerns to [wwrc@militaryonesource.com](mailto:wwrc@militaryonesource.com).

## "Gifts to Army" Web Site Launches July 21



The U.S. Army launched a new web site today, July 21, called "Gifts to Army" which is an online resource developed to streamline and process gifts that American citizens and organizations contribute to benefit Soldiers and their Families.

Soldiers, their Family members, and Army civilians often get questions from people about how they can support the Army. People often want to know how they can help men and women in uniform with gifts, money, goods, or services to show their support for the troops. This web site provides an online resource to answer the question: "How can we help?"

"Many individuals have asked how they can help the Army," said Ms. Joyce Morrow, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. "We appreciate how generous the public is and the concern they have for the welfare of our Soldiers and Families. We've developed this Web site to provide information on how to contribute money, goods or services to benefit Soldiers and their Families."

The launch of this web site centralizes the many venues and paths for the public whose offers of support fall within the Army's overall Gift Program, which is managed by the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. Contribution options addressed in the Web site include support for the Army, Soldiers and Families, Wounded Warriors, Army installations, and more.

"This web site is not intended as a solicitation, but merely as a way to provide information on the options and programs available to those who have expressed a desire to make a donation," Morrow said.

The Army Gift Program has existed for many years under the authority of Title 10 United States Code, Section 2601. On Jan. 28, President Bush signed into law, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181, Section 593), which expanded the Army's gift acceptance authority to include acceptance of gifts on behalf of Wounded Soldiers, Wounded Civilian Employees, and their Families.

This new Web site provides a central source of information to refer those interested in contributing to and supporting Soldiers and Army Families and ways for them to express that support if they choose.

For more information, visit the "Gifts to Army" Web site at

<http://giftstoarmy.army.mil/>

### **M - VICTRI (Veterans Initiative Center & Research Institute)**

ribbon cutting ceremony for their new facility in Building 11 at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center Campus. Ceremonies are scheduled for 11:00 AM on November 14, 2008.

The VICTRI is a cutting edge, state-of-the-art center built to assist Veterans and their family members to start, build and sustain successful businesses or initiatives through Education, Services and Support. In addition to providing a center for business excellence for Veterans and their family members, the Research Institute arm of the VICTRI is one of only a very few think tanks in the nation that focuses completely on Veterans Issues. The VICTRI is a non-profit organization, and is a measurable, results-driven organization led, managed and staffed by Veterans and Family members. This organization which has been in the formative stages for over 10 years, will open its doors to serve Veterans in early 2009. For more information about the organization, please contact Jack Scharrett at (952)-913-3931 or via email at [jack@victri.org](mailto:jack@victri.org) [www.victri.org](http://www.victri.org).



**VICTRI in Building 11 at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center Campus**

### **Save Money with Military discounts**

To save money with military discounts on just about anything you can imagine! For your service, local and nationwide merchants say “thanks with discounts and coupons for you and your family. Over 700+ companies offering discounts.

<http://benefits.military.com/DC/DealIndex.jsp>

### **Pay & COLA Raises for 2009**

Military pay raises are based on private sector pay growth to ensure military pay is kept reasonably comparable to private sector pay. Military pay raise:

3.9%, effective 1 Jan Civil service pay raise: 3.9%, effective 1 Jan (not including locality pay)

Military retirees COLA: 5.8%, effective 1 Dec (those who retired 2008 receive partial COLA)

VA disability and pensions: 5.8%, effective 1 Dec

Social Security COLA: 5.8%, effective 1 Dec

SBP annuities COLA: 5.8%, effective 1 Dec

For more information on COLA, please visit the Social Security's website.

### **TRICARE Reserve Select Premiums Decrease**

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is a premium-based health plan for National Guard and Reserve personnel who are not eligible or enrolled in Federal Employee Health Benefit plans. Effective January 1, 2009, TRICARE will reduce the monthly premium rates for TRS. Monthly premiums will drop 44% from \$81 to \$47.51, and TRS family coverage will drop 29% from \$253 to \$180.17. To read the full release please visit the following link: [http://www.tricare.mil/pressroom/news\\_print.aspx?fid=480](http://www.tricare.mil/pressroom/news_print.aspx?fid=480)

### **Take a Moment to Honor**

A new web portal, GreatAmericans.com, focuses on American role models, by featuring stories of the men and women of the Armed Forces who serve our nation. You can share your thoughts and ideas in the Forum section. Please take a moment and visit this online salute of patriotism at: <http://www.GreatAmericans.com>.

### **Operation Love Reunited**

Operation Love Reunited is a photography organization offering free photography sessions to deploying, deployed and reuniting military families. Each family gets 2 free sessions. The photographers have agreed to send albums to deployed Servicemembers at no cost. For more information please visit their website at <http://www.OpLove.org>.

### **Sam's Club Offers Military Open House**

Sam's Club is hosting three open houses nationwide for military personnel. Those with proper military identification can shop without a membership and will not be charged the 10 percent non-member service fee on Monday, December 1 and Monday, December 15. To read the full article, visit the following link.

<http://pressroom.samsclub.com/News/8769.aspx>

### **Travel Reimbursement Increases for Eligible Veterans**

Effective November 17, 2008, eligible veterans will see an increase in their mileage reimbursement, from 28.5 cents per mile to 41.5 cents per mile from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Congress, which mandates such increases, recently provided

funding to the VA to increase the reimbursement rate. For more information visit <http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1617>.

### **TroopTube Boosts Morale Among Deployed Servicemembers**

Servicemembers overseas can now receive near-real-time video “shout-outs” from their loved ones stateside. TroopTube, modeled after the popular video-viewing site, YouTube, is a website managed by the Department of Defense’s Military OneSource information network. The website allows family events and milestones to be viewed by the deployed Servicemembers, making them feel closer to home. TroopTube can be accessed at <http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com>.

### **Bankruptcy Abuse Act changed to assist returning Reservists October 20, 2008**

The 2005 *Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention Act* changed the U.S. bankruptcy code, making it significantly harder for individual debt to be discharged in bankruptcy. The changes to the law require filers to pass a rigorous means test to assess whether the individual is qualified for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection. The means test looks at an individual’s income and expenses for the six month period preceding a bankruptcy filing, which unfairly penalizes National Guard members and Reservists who no longer receive the higher pay that active duty provides but are still evaluated as if they do. The law prevents courts from dismissing bankruptcy cases based on means-testing if the Guard or Reserve member has been on active duty since September 11, 2001 and was active for more than 90 days. The law is effective through the first year and a half following the Soldier’s return home.

### **Enhanced VA Mortgage Options Now Available for Veterans Of Potential Benefit to Those in Financial Distress (24 October 2008)**

WASHINGTON (Oct.24) -- Veterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loan. These new options are available as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008, which the President signed into law on October 10, 2008.

"These changes will allow VA to assist a substantial number of veterans with subprime mortgages refinance into a safer, more affordable, VA guaranteed loan," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Veterans in financial distress due to high rate subprime mortgages are potentially the greatest beneficiaries."

VA has never guaranteed subprime loans. However, as a result of the new law VA can now help many more veterans who currently have subprime loans.

The new law makes changes to VA's home loan refinancing program. Veterans who wish to refinance their subprime or conventional mortgage may now do so

for up to 100 percent of the value of the property. These types of loans were previously limited to 90 percent of the value.

Additionally, Congress raised VA's maximum loan amount for these types of refinancing loans. Previously, these refinancing loans were capped at \$144,000. With the new legislation, such loans may be made up to \$729,750 depending on where the property is located.

Increasing the loan-to-value ratio and raising the maximum loan amount will allow more qualified veterans to refinance through VA, allowing for savings on interest costs or even potentially avoiding foreclosure.

Originally set to expire at the end of this month, VA's authority to guaranty Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs) and Hybrid ARMs was also extended under this new law through September 30, 2012. Unlike conventional ARMs and hybrid ARMs, VA limits interest rate increases on these loans from year to year, as well as over the life of the loans.

Since 1944, when home loan guaranties were offered with the original GI Bill, VA has guaranteed more than 18 million home loans worth over \$911 billion. This year, about 180,000 veterans, active duty servicemembers, and survivors received loans valued at about \$36 billion.

For more information, or to obtain help from a VA Loan Specialist, veterans may call VA at 1-877-827-3702 or visit [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov)

### **improved quality Armed Forces Recreation Center (AFRC)**

Armed Forces Recreation Center (AFRC) full-service resort hotels are Joint Service Facilities that provide quality, affordable, family-oriented vacation recreation opportunities to service members, their families, and authorized patrons of the Total Defense Force. Active-duty military, retirees, currently employed and retired Department of Defense civilians, reservists, delayed entry recruits and family members can all use these facilities.

**What has the Army done?** AFRCs, operated by Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command, are located at ideal vacation destinations across the world. The five sites include the Hale Koa Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii; Shades of Green on Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.; Dragon Hill Lodge in Seoul, South Korea; Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany; and the Army's newest location—The Cape Henry Inn and Beach Club, at Fort Story, Va..

**Why is this important to the Army?** Providing high-quality, affordable resort-style facilities is commensurate with the philosophy that Soldiers are entitled to the same quality of life as the citizens they are pledged to defend. High demand at Shades of Green, historically the only AFRC located in the continental United States, coupled with



thousands of troops returning through Army Transformation efforts and the current climate of multiple deployments, pointed to the need for additional stateside AFRC venues. Acquisition of The Cape Henry Inn and Beach Club located on the Eastern Seaboard provides a leisure destination for thousands of eligible patrons living within a four-hour drive of the Virginia Beach area.

**What is the Army doing?** The Army converted the existing 95-room oceanfront property, run as an installation-level recreational facility, to an AFRC, April 1, 2007. Plans include expanding to more than three times the current guest room capacity, with modern food and beverage services, recreation facilities, and complete conference capabilities. Execution of the significant upgrade to The Cape Henry Inn and Beach Club will require demolition of the existing community club to make room for construction of a new 150 room hotel commencing in fiscal 2009. The center will also serve as a rest and relaxation facility and a site for family and marriage retreats for redeploying service members.

Revenues from AFRCs are reinvested to maintain and improve the physical plant, while providing the greatest possible value for guests. The Army continues to promote strong family values by providing the AFRCs; a reflection of the Army's strong commitment to quality of life.

<http://www.armymwr.com/portal/travel/recreationcenters/>

### **Wounded Warrior Resource Center Now Open**

Military OneSource has launched a Wounded Warrior Resource Center. Servicemembers and their family members requesting support can call 1-800-342-9647 or send an email to [wwrc@militaryonesource.com](mailto:wwrc@militaryonesource.com) with any questions 24/7. The Resource Center will offer assistance in addition to the current specialized wounded warrior programs established by each military department. For the full press release, go to

<http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12190>

### **Sears Sponsors "Heroes at Home Wish Registry"**

Sears is asking the American public to reach out to military families this holiday season through the "Heroes at Home Wish Registry." Families of Servicemembers active from August 25, 2008 through December 25, 2008 can compile a "wish list" online at [sears.com/wish](http://sears.com/wish). Individuals wanting to donate can purchase Sears gift cards to help fulfill each family's wishes. Please go to the following web site for complete details:

<http://www.sears.com/wish>.

**M - Pro-bona Health care service for veterans and their families**

As part of the Warrior to Citizen Campaign, Northwestern Health Sciences University ([www.nwhealth.edu](http://www.nwhealth.edu)) and Adler Graduate School ([www.alfredadler.edu](http://www.alfredadler.edu)) are partnering to provide pro-bono health care services to Minnesota military personnel and their families, including chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage, psychological therapy, and family counseling. Services are provided by senior interns and supervised by faculty clinicians. The nearly dozen veterans who have taken advantage of these complimentary services report a very positive experience. For more information, contact the clinics below:

De Rusha Clinical Education Center 2501 W 84th Street, Bloomington, MN  
952-885-5444 (chiropractic, psychological counseling, family counseling)

Edith Davis Teaching Clinic 2501 W 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Bloomington, MN 952-885-5450  
(acupuncture, oriental medicine)

Burnsville Natural Care Center 12445 River Ridge Blvd, Burnsville, MN 952-894-7620  
(massage therapy)

### **Extra Social Security Earnings for Retirement**

According to the Social Security Administration, Servicemembers may qualify for higher earnings for military service if they were active duty between 1940 and 2001. In order to receive the benefit, Servicemembers must go to their local Social Security Office and request the earnings increase. For complete details, go to <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>.

### **M - Northwest Airlines Waives Bag Fee for Troops on Orders**

Effective August 15th, Northwest Airlines is waiving the fee for a third checked bag by military personnel traveling on military orders. Military personnel may check three bags, each under 70 pounds, for no additional cost. For the full article, go to [http://www.militarytimes.com/news/2008/08/gns\\_northwest\\_bagfees\\_081508/](http://www.militarytimes.com/news/2008/08/gns_northwest_bagfees_081508/).

### **Army Begins Uniform Modification Program for Wounded Warriors August 05, 2008**

WASHINGTON -- The Army recently began a new program that offers uniform modifications - at no cost to wounded Soldiers - through the Army & Air Force Exchange Service.

The Wounded Warrior Clothing Support Program officially began in May 2008 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for Soldiers who have been injured in combat.

Wounded Soldiers can have their uniforms uniquely modified according to their injuries. This program not only makes the lives of injured Soldiers easier, officials said, but serves to restore a sense of pride and dignity they rightfully deserve when wearing their uniform.

"This program is great because it takes care of our Soldiers," said Maj. Gen. Vincent Boles, assistant deputy chief of staff, Army G-4. "The team of individuals responsible for bringing this program to life saw a need and made it happen. Now our wounded warriors can wear their uniforms with pride, dignity and comfort."

Walter Reed and Brooke Army Medical Centers were chosen to be the first facilities to implement this program because they care for a large percentage of Soldiers injured in combat, officials said. Soldiers who receive treatment at other medical facilities can take advantage of the program through their local AAFES stores.

One of the more common uniform modifications includes adding zippers to the seams of trousers and coat sleeves, giving a Soldier access to a prosthetic. Other modifications might include elastic blousing or Velcro closures on the bottom of trouser legs. Various modifications can be made to shirt sleeves and the knee area of trousers. Additional fabric can also be added inside the uniform where injuries are sensitive or prosthetics cause more wear and tear. Modifications can be made to any Army uniform.

The process of getting a uniform modified is similar to filling a medical prescription, officials said. A Soldier will work with his or her occupational or physical therapist, who will write a prescription for the changes. This prescription is written on a Personal Clothing Request, DA Form 3078. It will specify the measurements and describe what types of modifications need to be made. The Soldier will then take this prescription and his or her uniform to an AAFES designated location to turn in the items. The modifications will be made and the uniform returned within three to five days.

Through the program, Soldiers also have the opportunity to get commercial footwear designed specifically for prosthetics. The heel of a standard Army boot is too high for use with a prosthetic and causes amputees to lean forward. The custom boots this program provides minimizes that effect, allowing Soldiers to wear the full uniform as it is intended to be worn. Customized athletic shoes are also available.

Just like customizing their uniform, Soldiers need a prescription to obtain special footwear, and they also need their commander's signature on the prescription. The boots and athletic shoes can be purchased by either the medical facility or the local commander.

Several groups played a role in bringing this program to fruition, including the Army G-4, the Clothing and Services Office, AAFES, the Walter Reed Warrior Transition Brigade and the Walter Reed Garrison Clothing Issue Point. The Marine Corps' ideas and lessons learned from their Wounded Warrior support experience, as well as the selfless service of the non-profit organization "Sew Much Comfort" also played a role in the program's development for the Army.

**Tell Someone About CaringBridge**

We hope you are finding CaringBridge to be a powerful way to stay connected with and support Joe. Is there another person in your life who could benefit from CaringBridge?

Every month, over 1 million people use CaringBridge to stay connected during a hospitalization, cancer treatment, surgery and recovery, a significant accident or injury, a premature birth, while waiting for a transplant, or while caring for an elderly parent. These families share information and receive love and support for a wide array of medical conditions.

Spread the word and share CaringBridge with a friend, colleague, or loved one today. They'll be so grateful for your help.

**[Click here to tell a friend about CaringBridge.](#)**

You're receiving this message because you are a registered visitor to this CaringBridge site. CaringBridge is pleased to now offer journal update notifications to registered visitors. If you no longer wish to receive journal update notifications, you can [unsubscribe now](#).

[Contact us](#) with any questions about using the site, or if you need assistance. Please do not reply to this e-mail.

Thank you for using CaringBridge!

CaringBridge : 1995 Rahn Cliff Court, Suite 200 : Eagan, MN 55122 : 651.789.2300 : <http://www.caringbridge.org>

***CaringBridge is a free, nonprofit web service that connects family and friends to share information, love and support during a health care crisis, treatment and recovery.***

- **Gifts to the Army:** On 18 July 2008, the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army launched the "Gifts to the Army", an online resource that helps communicate the many venues and paths for the American public to make contributions to Soldiers and their Families as part of the Army's overall Gift Program, if they choose to do so. The site contains links to the FMWRC Gifts site, sites for MEDCOM and Wounded Warriors, employment, the Army Gift Office in OAA, and a link to other (non-Army) sites that directly and indirectly support Soldiers and Families. I encourage each of you to access the site and become familiar with its features so you can assist anyone with an interest in giving to navigate the site. The intent, of course, is NOT to solicit contributions (which we are prohibited from doing), but to provide a resource to those who ask how they can help Soldiers and Families.

Website:

<http://giftstoarmy.army.mil>  
<http://giftstoarmy.army.mil/>



## [Congress Passes HEART Act](#)

President Bush signed the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) Act (H.R.6081) into law (public Law 110-245) on June 17, 2008. The HEART Act will permanently allow tax-exempt pay received in a combat zone to qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and will permit contributions of military death gratuity payments to Roth IRAs and Education Savings Accounts. To read all of the provisions, please visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.06081::>

Section 111 of the bill provides a 20% tax credit to small businesses that pay a wage differential to employees after they are mobilized. For purposes of the section, a small business is defined as having fewer than 50 employees. The small business may only claim a maximum credit of \$20,000 in differential payments per employee per year. The credit only applies to wages paid after the effective date of the act. For several years, OCAR and the US Chamber of Commerce have advocated for tax credits for small businesses that employ Army Reserve Soldiers. The HEART Act is one of the first recognitions of the financial challenges small businesses face when employees are mobilized.

<http://www.soldiersperspective.us/2008/05/29/congress-passes-heart-act>

### **Spirit of America-**

[www.SpiritofAmerica.net](http://www.SpiritofAmerica.net)

### **Extending the goodwill of the American people to advance freedom worldwide.**

Spirit of America is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that supports the troops and their efforts to build relationships with our future allies in the developing world. They provide a wide range of services such as providing soccer balls and other goods to children in Iraq, assisting with infrastructure, building schools, and setting up independent Iraqi news organizations to provide an alternative to Al Jazeera. Donors of this charity will have a tangible positive impact on the future of the children in conflict zones as well as the future of America. Please consider donating today.

Spirit of America has three main objectives, which can also be found on their website: Increase the reach, scale and impact of the informal humanitarian activities that take place on the front lines in troubled regions.

Contribute charitable goods that can have a positive, practical and timely impact in the local communities where American personnel are involved.

Establish connections and strengthen bonds between the American people and those in countries struggling for freedom and democracy.

Military Outreach Director-

[Shelle@SpiritofAmerica.net](mailto:Shelle@SpiritofAmerica.net)

### **Student Veterans of America (SVA)**

is a coalition of student veterans groups from college campuses across the United States. Founded in January of 2008, SVA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that works to develop new student groups, coordinate between existing student groups, and advocate on behalf of student veterans at the local, state, and national level.

### **Student Veterans of America**

P.O. Box 77673  
Washington, DC 20013  
(202) 939-9702

[contact@studentveterans.org](mailto:contact@studentveterans.org)

### **Ladies of Liberty (Soldiers' Angels)**

The Ladies of Liberty team of Soldiers' Angels focuses on the needs of deployed female servicemembers.

We understand that females are instrumental in the current war (as in the past), and make special efforts to support them in their missions while showcasing our appreciation for their service. We assist with supplies for their unique health and hygiene needs, and help them experience a few pampering moments to rejuvenate and "be good to themselves."

Almost two million women in America's history have been veterans--from the American Revolution to Panama, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, women have served in some way in every American conflict. Thirty-three thousand women served in WWI, and almost 500,000 took part in WWII. During the Korean era, 120,000 women were in uniform, and 7,000 were deployed in-theater during Vietnam. In Desert Storm, seven percent of the total U.S. forces deployed were women - over 40,000 personnel. In terms of the scope of women serving our country, Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom are no different than past conflicts. Today's heroic deployed women--whose patriotism, courage and perseverance are shaping the nation on a daily basis--are in the same tradition of strength as those who served previously in this special sisterhood.

[www.soldiersangels.org](http://www.soldiersangels.org)

[TheLadiesofLiberty@gmail.com](mailto:TheLadiesofLiberty@gmail.com)

### **DoD Approves New Social Networking Website**

Pentagon officials approved "Websites for Heroes," a network-secure, password-protected website for Soldiers and families. The website allows families to post 2-hours of video, unlimited pictures, message boards, kids' pages and interactive calendars. The website will enable troops to maintain communications with their families during deployments and other assignments. Previously, the DoD banned social networking sites,



such as MySpace and YouTube, from their computers making daily interaction difficult for military families. “Websites for Heroes” is exempt from that ban and is accessible on DoD computers. Donations are accepted (\$99 per year) for military families to access the site. So far, more than 1,300 military families have requested a website. For more information, go to <http://www.websitesforheroes.com/>.

## **Ombudsman Program in Support of Warriors in Transition**

### **What is it?**

The U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) Ombudsman Program is an avenue for warriors in transition and their Families to resolve issues, concerns and complaints arising during their transition process. MEDCOM established the Ombudsman Program in April 2007 and to date the program consists of 48 Ombudsmen located at 29 sites. Several sites will soon be added in Europe. Ombudsmen also provide services to remote sites as well as Community Based Health Care Organizations. Ombudsmen are located at Army military treatment facilities (MTFs) and serve as independent, impartial and confidential advocates between MEDCOM, the Soldier and their Families, and the MTF commander by acting as communicators, facilitators and problem solvers.

### **How do ombudsmen impact warriors in transition?**

Since inception in April 2007, Ombudsmen have assisted nearly 7,000 WT and Family members. Ombudsmen resolve complaints, assist in obtaining accurate information and act as the advocate for warriors in transition and their Families who are faced with complex, often overwhelming issues such as their healthcare, pay, physical disability processing, reserve-component medical retention and transition to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

### **What types of problems do ombudsmen solve?**

For example, the Family of one wounded Soldier requested he be transferred from Fort Hood, Texas, to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, which was closer to their home. Ombudsmen arranged the transfer and the Medical Command's Medical Assistance Group arranged for his mother to receive counseling. The mother of a Soldier with a back injury requested that he receive neurology care. Womack Army Medical Center worked with the Soldier and his Family to schedule a neurology appointment and an MRI scan while he was on leave from deployment in Afghanistan.

### **Why is this important to the Army?**

Apart from war itself, the care of our warriors in transition and their Families is the top priority of the Army. The Ombudsman Program, along with the Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline (800-984-8523) are integral in bringing issues to the attention of Army leadership as well as identifying trends or patterns which must be addressed by senior leaders.

**Resources:**

Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline: 800-984-8523  
Overseas DSN: 312-328-0002  
Stateside DSN: 328-0002

[Email: wsfsupport@conus.army.mil](mailto:wsfsupport@conus.army.mil)

**VA Announces On-Line Claims Applications**

WASHINGTON (July 16, 2008) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that on-line applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors and other claimants filing initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

Effective immediately, VA will now process applications received through its on-line application website (VONAPP) without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications.

VONAPP is a Web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans, survivors and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery.

VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors. The on-line application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more.

Over 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from VA and approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

<http://www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm>

**M - The Saint Paul Resource Center**

The Resource Center welcomes home combat veterans. They provide the following quality counseling services to eligible veterans; military readjustment, bereavement, alcohol and drug, military sexual trauma, marriage and family, as well as benefit counseling.

Location: Veterans Resource Center      Phone: 651-644-4022  
Interstate Commerce Center  
550 County Road D  
Suite #10  
New Brighton, MN 55112

### **Dog Tags for Military Children**

Dog Tags for Kids is a grassroots project which enables Servicemembers to send engraved dog tags to their children. The dog tags are provided free and are sent directly to the Servicemembers who personally send them to their children at home. The dog tags are engraved with "With Love From Dad/Mom" and include the branch of service, deployment location, and the year. To donate to the project or to request a dog tag for your children, please go to <http://www.dogtagsforkids.com/>.

### **Discounted Welcome Home Signs for Troops**

Buildasign.com is selling 10,000 welcome home banners to military families at 50% off the retail price. Ten thousand banners have already been given out free of charge in support of returning troops. To design and order your banner, go to <http://www.buildasign.com/troops>

### **Army pays for degrees - Attention Army Veteran,**

Your service in the Army can give you a head start on getting a degree. Below is a list of the top benefits you need to take advantage of today.

**GI Bill – \$47,556 to pay for a degree**

**College credit for training – take fewer classes**

**Military Scholarships – Over \$300 Million for Veterans**

Use these benefits to secure a better future for you and your family.

**Start today by finding Military-Friendly Schools.**

<http://www.military.com>

### **Educational Assistance Available Through the Veterans Upward Bound Program**

The Veterans Upward Bound Program is a free U.S. Department of Education program designed to help veterans refresh their academic skills and receive a college degree. The program focuses on:

- basic skill development to help veterans complete a high school equivalency test and apply to college
- short-term remedial or refresher classes for high school graduates

assistance with college applications  
assistance with financial aid applications  
personalized counseling  
academic advice and career counseling  
assistance in obtaining Veteran services from other resources  
exposure to cultural events, academic programs, and other educational activities

To determine if you are eligible and to find out more about the program, please visit their website at <http://navub.org/>.

### **M - Outward Bound**

Outward Bound, an international non-profit outdoor education program, is offering fully funded outdoor adventure excursions to all OEF/OIF veterans. It doesn't matter what your current military status is (active, inactive, discharged, retired) - you're eligible to attend as long as you deployed in support of OEF/OIF combat operations while in the military.

These five-day excursions offer adventure activities such as backpacking, rock climbing, canyoneering, canoeing, and dog sledding in beautiful wilderness areas in Maine, Texas, Colorado, California, and Minnesota. Scheduled courses from Sep 08-Feb 09 are listed below, and future courses will be scheduled soon. All expedition costs for lodging, equipment, food, and instruction are completely funded by a multi-million dollar Sierra Club grant, including the participants' round-trip transportation between home and the wilderness site. The excursion is offered at no cost to the participant.

To sign up for one of the prescheduled courses, please contact Doug Hayward at 1-866-669-2362, ext. 8387, or simply e-mail him at [obvets@outwardbound.org](mailto:obvets@outwardbound.org). To learn more about the OEF/OIF program, visit the website at [www.outwardboundwilderness.org/veterans.html](http://www.outwardboundwilderness.org/veterans.html). You can also contact two of our retired Judge Advocates, Joe and Amy Frisk, who are working for Outward Bound on this incredible program at [vetsor@outwardbound.org](mailto:vetsor@outwardbound.org), or at (303) 968-4420.

### **OPEN ENROLLMENT COURSES FOR 2008/2009 OUTWARD BOUND OEF/OIF WAR VETERANS EXPEDITIONS**

Leadville, Colorado: Backpacking and Rock Climbing in the Colorado Rockies

September 3-7, 2008  
October 4-8, 2008

Newry, Maine: Backpacking and Canoeing

October 7-11, 2008  
October 19-23, 2008

Big Bend, Texas: Backpacking and Canyoneering

November 2-6, 2008&nbsp;  
November 15-19, 2008&nbsp;

Joshua Tree National Monument, California:&nbsp; Backpacking and Rock Climbing  
December 3-7, 2008&nbsp;  
December 14-18, 2008&nbsp;  
Ely, Minnesota:&nbsp; Dog Sledding

February 3-7, 2009

### **New GI Bill Overview**

Many post 9/11 veterans and servicemembers will soon see a new package of education benefits. This new Post 9/11 GI Bill, or so-called GI Bill for the 21st Century, boasts the most comprehensive education benefits package since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944.

The new bill goes well beyond helping to pay for tuition; many veterans who served after Sept. 11, 2001, will get full tuition and fees, a new monthly housing stipend, and a \$1,000 a year stipend for books and supplies. The new bill also gives Reserve and Guard members who have been activated for more than 90 days since 9/11 access to the same GI Bill benefits.

The following fact sheet provides a quick reference to answer the following questions you may have about Senator Webb's Post 9/11 GI Bill.

<http://education.military.com/money-for-school/gi-bill/new-gi-bill-overview>

### **Websites Allow Military Families to Stay Connected**

“Websites for Heroes” is a non-profit website that allows military families to stay connected while deployed or stationed overseas. Secure websites are donated to military families with the capability of uploading unlimited photos, message board or blog postings, calendar updates and up to two hours of streaming video. To request your free website, go to <http://www.websitesforheroes.com>.

### **M - Mary Pawlenty's First Lady Military Family Care Initiative**

If you are a member of a service organization, community organization or faith-based organization and want to provide volunteer services to the families of military personnel during this time of separation from their loved-one, you have come to the right place.

<http://www.governor.state.mn.us/firstLady/flmain1.asp>

**M - The 5th Annual Veterans Benefit Motorcycle Run** will be held June 28, 2008. All proceeds go towards care packages to be sent to our men and women in uniform serving overseas.& nbsp; For more information visit

[www.bikerplaza.com/motorcycle-events-mn.html](http://www.bikerplaza.com/motorcycle-events-mn.html)

**Operation Purple Camps** are FREE to children and teens ages 6-17 years of parents serving in: National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, NOAA, Public Health, Air Force, and the Army. Camper **registration begins March 24, 2008 and ends May 5, 2008 for all Operation Purple camp locations**. All details on how to register and the necessary forms to apply for camp are available on the website: Click on the applicable state for camp registration, application, and contact information. For specific information on a particular *Operation Purple* camp, please contact Cynthia Clagg at [operationpurple@nmfa.org](mailto:operationpurple@nmfa.org). Media interested in covering an *Operation Purple* event should contact Michelle Joyner at 703-931-6632.

<http://www.operationpurple.org/>.

**SOLDIERS' ANGELS AND BAKE ME A WISH! SEND FREEDOM  
CAKES TO OUR MILITARY HEROES WITH EVERY CAKE  
PURCHASED ON [BAKEMEAWISH.COM](http://www.bakemeawish.com)**

*Organizations Partner to Send Freedom Cakes to Our Troops, Wherever They Are*

Pasadena, CA June 20, 2008 - With thousands of U.S. troops deployed overseas, the Soldiers' Angels and [BakeMeAWish.com](http://www.bakemeawish.com) are offering a unique opportunity for consumers to send a message of hope and love to a hero. Administered by Soldiers' Angels, America's largest non-profit troop support organization, BakeMeAWish.com will deliver a gourmet birthday cake to a soldier serving overseas, or wherever our Veterans are in the USA, with the purchase of the new Freedom Cake.

The Freedom Cake will feature delicious strawberry filling, whipped cream mousse, moist yellow cake, red & blue sprinkles and an American flag on top. Each cake can be shipped domestically in the US, including Alaska and Hawaii. This campaign is dedicated to ensuring that our deployed military personnel know just how valuable their contributions are to this country, and that they are in our thoughts and prayers during this special time of the year. Those who purchase the Freedom cake here in the US will get an extra bonus, knowing that part of their gift was used to support our armed forces.

'BakeMeAWish.com is proud to work with Soldiers' Angels to keep the morale high among the troops for the Fourth of July. For every purchase of the Freedom cake on our site, our customers will have a gift cake sent to a soldier as a donation from them. When you send a cake to a loved one here at home, you are also sending a cake to a hero, either overseas or here at home. I can't think of a stronger message of hope and love than this,' said Josh Kaye, President of Bake Me A Wish.

This program is in addition to the hundreds of cakes BakeMeAWish.com already donates to soldiers' on the company's behalf. Soldiers' Angels President, Patti Patton-Bader, echoed similar sentiments regarding the partnership: 'We are very excited to partner with



Bake Me a Wish and have the opportunity to send a Freedom Cake to a soldier or hero for every freedom cake purchased on BakeMeAWish.com. These men and women are risking their lives, and have served our country while being away from their families for extended periods of time; a special cake from home can brighten their day and let them know they are thought of.'

Military families interested in sending a birthday cake to their soldier can contact Soldiers' Angels at (615) 676-0239 or visit their website at [www.soldiersangels.org](http://www.soldiersangels.org). Tax deductible contributions to the program through Soldiers' Angels can be made by sending checks to AFF/Bake Me A Wish, Attention: Operation: Birthday Cake at 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 305, New York, New York 10017.

#### About Soldiers Angels'

Soldiers' Angels is a volunteer-led 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing aid and comfort to the men and women of the United States Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and their families. Founded by the mother of two American soldiers, we are an international organization with members in all fifty U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and several friendly countries who support America's men and women in uniform. We were incorporated in the state of Nevada in June of 2003. Our slogan, 'May No Soldier Go Unloved,' encapsulates the motivation behind Soldiers' Angels. By working together and sharing a common vision of service, the volunteers of Soldiers' Angels continue to demonstrate active care and concern for veterans, the wounded, deployed service members and their families.

#### About Bake Me A Wish!

BakeMeAWish.com is a premiere on-line bakery shop founded in 2004. Each cake is handmade from the freshest ingredients from award-winning, time-tested, family recipes, perfected by Master Pastry Chefs. [www.BakeMeAWish.com](http://www.BakeMeAWish.com) offers a diverse selection of decadent cakes, shipped directly to the consumer, ready for any occasion whether it is an elegant anniversary, chic dinner party, office birthday party, casual gathering, sophisticated New Year's Eve extravaganza or family holiday gathering. All cakes are packaged in a customized box at the bakery with a personalized note.

BakeMeAWish.com offers corporate loyalty programs for organizations to reward customers or employees with gourmet cake gifts. Bake Me A Wish! Can be found on the web at [www.BakeMeAWish.com](http://www.BakeMeAWish.com), or by calling 888-987-9474.

Individuals and corporations can also purchase gourmet cakes for domestic delivery online at [www.bakemeawish.com](http://www.bakemeawish.com) or for a soldier they may know at [www.bakemeawish.com/operation-birthday-cakes.php](http://www.bakemeawish.com/operation-birthday-cakes.php). Starting at \$54.99, each gourmet cake ordered through BakeMeAWish.com for will see 5% of sale contributed to the program. Domestic deliveries are guaranteed overnight if ordered by 3pm ET and birthday cakes to APO/FPO addresses are shipped as soon as possible through the postal service and take between 7 and 14 days to arrive depending on final destination.

## **Help Is Available for Injured and Ill Warriors and Their Families** (Article 5) **[Warrior Navigation and Assistance Program](#)**

Living with a traumatic injury or illness isn't easy. These catastrophic conditions not only negatively impact the affected warriors, but also their family members. That's why Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc. (Humana Military) introduced the Warrior Navigation and Assistance Program (WNAP) to support injured or ill active duty service members and activated National Guard and Reserve members and their families.

The new program offers information and guidance to wounded warriors and their families who are navigating the Military Health System (MHS), and assists those who are in transition from the MHS to the civilian health care system. Injured or ill warriors and their family members receive person-to-person guidance and access to a new advocacy unit, specially trained to address the unique challenges that many warriors face.

Through the WNAP dedicated, toll-free number, 1-888-4GO-WNAP (1-888-446-9627), warriors and their families have direct access to a multidisciplinary team that will help solve problems and provide other medical or community resources.

The WNAP provides access to information on all available resources, whether it is through the MHS, Veterans Affairs or community assets. A broad spectrum of clinical programs designed to meet the special needs of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coast guard members and their families also is available.

"Our company is here to assist these American heroes—and their families—in obtaining access to high-quality health care services and ensuring they have actionable information about the full range of their medical benefits as members of the military community," said Dave Baker, president and CEO of Humana Military. "Creation of this special unit will help us meet their unique needs."

<http://www.humana-military.com/South/bene/warrior-assistance.htm>

## **America Recognizes Military Sacrifices on Memorial Day Veterans Urged to Wear Medals with Pride**

WASHINGTON (May 23, 2008) - From concerts to somber ceremonies and a moment of silence, Americans from coast to coast will recall the sacrifices of military members who paid the ultimate price for freedom on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26.

"This is our nation's day to remember its debt to those whose sacrifice in blood and battle secured a legacy of liberty for future generations," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

He reminded veterans to wear their military medals on Memorial Day, a practice called the Veterans Pride Initiative launched by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2006.

The personal exhibition of service medals on patriotic holidays is one way for veterans to show their support of the U.S. military and particularly those serving in the Global War on Terror, and to inspire conversation about military heritage with young people.

Information for veterans about the wearing of medals and how to replace lost medals is available at

<http://www.va.gov/veteranspride/>.

### **Free SAT-ACT Prep Software**

A group of National Football League (NFL) players and the eKnowledge Corp. are continuing their multi-million dollar sponsorship of SAT and ACT test preparation programs to all veterans, active-duty, reserve, and retired military members and their families, a \$200 value. The Department of Defense created a secure website to quickly confirm a person's military status. Personnel can access the confirmation and request pages through several military-related associations and organizations, such as the Military Home Front website for families, which offers access to the forms to confirm military status and process the order. Programs ship to domestic U.S. addresses and APO addresses. The sponsorship covers the regular purchase price and the family pays only the shipping and handling. To learn more about the program and the NFL/CFL players who provide this offer visit [their website](#).

<http://sat.eknowledge.com/military.asp>

### **VA Announces SGLI and VGLI Premium Reductions April 7, 2008**

Peake: Change Makes Programs More Affordable

WASHINGTON (April 7, 2008) - Veterans and military personnel with life insurance policies managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will see a reduction in their premiums, thanks to improved investment earnings and a reduction in non-combat claims.

The premium cuts affect military personnel covered by Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and veterans covered by the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI).

"The reduction in SGLI premiums makes life insurance even more affordable for today's men and women in uniform," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Lower VGLI premiums will allow more veterans to provide this low-cost financial security to their families."

On July 1, 2008, the premiums for basic SGLI will be 6.5 cents per month for \$1,000 of coverage, down from 7 cents per month for \$1,000. This translates into a 7 percent savings.

Servicemembers with the maximum \$400,000 of coverage will see their monthly premium reduced from \$28 to \$26. Servicemembers are also covered against severe traumatic injury for an additional dollar each month.

The reduction in SGLI premiums is made possible by lower, non-combat-related claims and increases in investment earnings. VA officials believe this premium reduction will help maintain the nearly universal participation in the program.

VGLI provides renewable term policies for people after their discharges from the military. Veterans pay premiums according to their age for this coverage.

On July 1, 2008, VGLI premium rates will be reduced for veterans aged 30 to 64, who make up 85 percent of those insured under the program.

Premium rates for those under age 30 are already competitive.

Premium reductions, ranging from 4 percent to 12 percent, are a result of fewer claims being received. The reductions will ensure that VGLI remains highly competitive with similar insurance offered by commercial insurers.

"With servicemembers putting their lives at risk against terrorism, life insurance coverage is more important than ever," added Peake.

Peake said the premium reductions should result in increased program participation and retention. With increased enrollment, the department may be able to reduce rates in the future.

More than 2.4 million people currently participate in the VA-managed SGLI program, with another 433,000 in VGLI. To obtain more information about the SGLI and VGLI premium reductions or to view a table with the new VGLI rates, visit the VA insurance Web site at <http://www.insurance.va.gov> or call the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance at 1-800-419-1473.

## **Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services**

What is it?

Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services is a Department of Defense program for which the Army Reserve Command serves as the Executive Agent. The program is executed through Commanders for Regional Readiness Commands worldwide. The basic tenet of Voluntary Education Services is to provide lifelong learning opportunities for Selected Reserve Soldiers that enhance their personal and professional development. Voluntary Education Services enhances recruitment, retention, and readiness of the Army Reserve.

What has the Army done?

The Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services program has provided an array of

educational opportunities and support initiatives since its inception. These programs and initiatives include:

- Tuition assistance (\$250 per semester hour, with a \$4,500 annual cap)
- Montgomery GI Bill (Chapters 1606 and 1607, respectively, for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans)
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Testing Program (College Level Exam Program and DANTES Subjects Standardized Tests)
- Student Guide to Success
- Credit for military experience
- Certification and licensure
- Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System
- Troops to Teachers Program
- Spouse to Teachers Program

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?

Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services was identified by the Chief, Army Reserve, as a Soldier priority for FY06. The Army Reserve is poised to streamline and enhance the Army Reserve Tuition Assistance program to ensure all eligible Soldiers are able to receive financial assistance. Army Reserve Education Services Specialists will continue to provide Soldiers with guidance and assistance in planning their education to enhance their military careers and make them more competitive in the civilian job market. In addition, Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services will continue to partner with DANTES to provide professional certification and licensure examinations to Soldiers, spouses, and Civilians.

Why is this important to the Army?

Many Soldiers enlist in the Army for educational benefits. This is a win-win situation for the Soldier and the Army. Education is one of the most important elements in helping a Soldier to reach his or her potential. Because the Army Reserve understands that an educated Soldier is better equipped to handle the tactical and technical challenges facing our Army today, it views education as an essential tool for developing an Army of capable and determined warriors to defend our Nation

### **M –Warrior to Citizen Challenge Coin Program - Honoring the Service**

**Challenging veterans to greatness. They know how to serve.**

The [Warrior to Citizen](#) Campaign coin is a symbol of gratitude for service to our state and nation. It also recognizes that a veteran's continued service—in the community—is both important and valued. **Challenge coins are carried as a symbol of pride, teamwork and unity amongst the bravest of our society.**



**What the coin means:**

The eagle represents each branch of the military as well as a “watchful eye” over veterans. The delta shape, or triangle, symbolizes change as a veterans moves between service to the three equally important building blocks of our society: nation, state & community.

**Current businesses *Honoring the Service...* Cedar Lake Speedway offers free admission 31 May 2008 read more...**[Businesses\\_HonoringService.pdf](#)

**Who can receive the coin?**

The coin is about Honoring the Service in all Services. Everyone who served in the United States Armed Forces is eligible for the coin. Military ID is required to receive the coin at hosted events such as Military Appreciation Days and Veteran Service Fairs. Contact [dmk37@hotmail.com](mailto:dmk37@hotmail.com) to request the coin at your event.

**Accompanying laminated business card:**

A laminated pocket card with phone numbers for veterans services—and a thank you message—comes with the coin.

**How you can be part of *Honoring the Service***

Would you like to donate for the minting and distribution of coins?

[Donate online here. The Vessey Chapter is a 501C 3 non profit #53-0193361](#)

Would your business like to honor veterans who carry the Warrior to Citizen coin with incentives, discounts, or some other special recognition?

Contact [dmk37@hotmail.com](mailto:dmk37@hotmail.com) or mail the attached [W2C coin brochure.pdf](#) form below to:

Dawn Kelly

Attn: Warrior to Citizen Campaign



1130 Montreal Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55116

### **What is a Challenge Coin?**

There are many stories about the origin of the challenge coin, but the most widely accepted one comes from the early history of the United States Army Air Service.

In World War I, the Air Service included volunteers from all walks of life. To commemorate their team work, one of the wealthier lieutenants created bronze medallions for each of the pilots in his squadron. The pilots treasured this gift and kept their medallions—or coins—closely guarded.

As the squadron made its way across Europe, one of its pilots was forced to land in enemy territory. He was captured and his belongings were confiscated. However, the pilot's captors missed an important detail: he still had the leather pouch he wore around his neck, which contained his medallion.

As the soldier was being transported to a POW camp, the convoy made an overnight stop. The village where they were staying was raided by allied soldiers and the pilot managed to escape. However, he realized the danger was not over. Without his military uniform or official information, how could he prove to the Allies that he was a member of the United States Army?

As he stood facing guaranteed execution, the pilot pulled the medallion from his leather pouch. The foreign soldiers recognized the coin's insignia, and ordered a stay of execution until they could confirm his identity.

After he returned home, news spread of the pilot's salvation, and what began as a simple token recognizing team work among soldiers quickly became a proud tradition among all branches of the United States Armed Forces.

**Challenge coins are carried as a symbol of pride, teamwork and unity amongst the bravest of our society.**

-Courtesy of Wendell's Inc.



---

**A Partnership Project** with [The Humphrey Institute Center for Democracy & Citizenship](#)  
& [Vessey Chapter of AUSA](#)

<http://www.vessey5401.org/article/319/warrior-to-citizen>

[http://www.publicwork.org/2\\_wcc.html](http://www.publicwork.org/2_wcc.html)

**Five Years of VA Health Care for Combat Veterans Peake: Honoring Commitment to Newest Combat Veterans** WASHINGTON (February 26, 2008) - Military veterans who served in combat since Nov. 11, 1998, including veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now eligible for five years of free medical care for most conditions from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). **This measure increases a two-year limit that has been in effect nearly a decade.** "By their service and their sacrifice, America's newest combat veterans have earned this special eligibility period for VA's world-class health care," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. The five-year deadline has no effect upon veterans with medical conditions related to their military service. Veterans may apply at any time after their discharge from the military -- even decades later -- for medical care for service-connected health problems. The new provision, part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 signed by President Bush on Jan. 28, 2008, applies to care in a VA hospital, outpatient clinic or nursing home. It also extends VA dental benefits -- previously limited to 90 days after discharge for most veterans -- to 180 days. Combat veterans who were discharged between Nov. 11, 1998 and Jan. 16, 2003, and who never took advantage of VA's health care system, have until Jan. 27, 2011 to qualify for free VA health care. The five-year window is also open to activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, if they served in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998 and were discharged under other than

dishonorable conditions. Veterans who take advantage of this five-year window to receive VA health care can continue to receive care after five years, although they may have to pay copayments for medical problems unrelated to their military service. Copayments range from \$8 for a 30-day supply of prescription medicine to \$1,024 for the first 90 days of inpatient care each year.

### **TRICARE is “Hooking Up” Beneficiaries and Providers**

The Behavioral Health Provider Locator and Appointment Assistance Service has taken more than 2,300 calls in the U.S. to help Active Duty Servicemembers and their families find approved behavioral health providers in their area. The service, which began three months ago, is a dedicated toll-free telephone line at 1-877-747-9579 where service representatives offer assistance in locating and making outpatient appointments with behavioral health care providers.

For more information about TRICARE and the Behavioral Health Provider Locator and Appointment Assistance Service, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/>

### **Children's Book Series Available at Discount to Military Families**

AUSA Family Programs has teamed up with the publishers of the Thumbs Up Johnnie™ children's book series to offer a 50 per cent discount to military families. Thumbs Up Johnnie and his friends help children learn important life skills about teamwork, friendship, financial responsibility, and good hygiene. The books are written for children aged four to eight years.

In the most recent book in the series, entitled Thumbs Up to the Red, White and Blue, Johnnie and his crew travel to visit the Nation's monuments, learn about the pledge of allegiance, and meet their friends from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

The discount applies to the Thumbs Up Johnnie™ books and the Thumbs Up Johnnie™ Reading Cuddle Buddy. Items can be ordered online at <http://www.thumbsupjohnnie.com> (click on “Johnnie Merchandise”), or by calling toll free (866) 749-4378. To receive the 50 per cent discount use the coupon code “AUSAFP” when ordering.

### **More Education Benefits Coming to Reservists, Guardsmen Changes Affect Those with Multiple Tours WASHINGTON (March 3, 2008)**

- Some members of the National Guard and the Reserves who serve on active duty will see a significant increase in their educational benefits, thanks to improvements announced today by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). "Reservists and National Guardsmen who serve multiple tours on active duty may get an increase in their educational benefits, in keeping with the value of their service to our nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. Under

new provisions, members who accumulate three years on active duty, regardless of breaks in service, may be eligible for the maximum payment under the Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP). Previously, reservists and guardsmen had to serve two continuous years on active duty to receive the highest payment. The new eligibility rules are retroactive to October, 1, 2007. The top payment under REAP is currently \$880.80 per month. The new law, part of the National Defense Authorization Act, also expands the period of eligibility for certain Guard and Reserve members who complete their service obligation before separation from the selected reserve. Members meeting these criteria may be eligible to use REAP benefits for a period of ten years following discharge. Benefits typically end upon separation for members who do not complete their full, obligated service. Additionally, some REAP-eligible National Guard and Reserve members may now make an extra contribution to the Department of Defense to increase their monthly benefit rates. Service members receive an additional \$5 per month for each \$20 contributed. With the maximum \$600 contribution, this option can add up to \$5,400 to a member's total 36-month education benefit package. Beginning on October 1, 2008, participants in REAP and the Montgomery GI Bill program for the Selected Reserve who pursue non-degree programs lasting less than two years may also be eligible to receive accelerated payments. During FY 2007, more than 60,000 National Guardsmen and reservists were paid under REAP, more than 41,000 were paid under the Montgomery GI Bill program for the Selected Reserves, and approximately 344,000 participants were paid under the Montgomery GI Bill for active-duty members. For more information on changes to VA's GI Bill benefits, go to [www.GIBILL.va.gov](http://www.GIBILL.va.gov) or contact VA directly at 1-888-GIBILL1 (or 1-888-442-4551).

**The 2008 edition of Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents** is now available for download from the Internet as a PDF. On the VA Home page ([www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)), click on "Benefits Booklet" in the Top Info Requests section on the right-hand side of page. The popular booklet describing benefits and services available to veterans and their dependents is also available on OPA's Feature Items page (<http://www.va.gov/opa/feature/index.asp>). Anyone setting links on a Web page or in a newsletter or other document should link to [http://www.va.gov/OPA/vadocs/current\\_benefits.asp](http://www.va.gov/OPA/vadocs/current_benefits.asp), which is a page dedicated exclusively to the booklet. While the booklet will always be available from OPA's Feature Items page, it will not always be at the top of the page, as it is today. The book is being printed and should be available in printed form in 3 to 4 weeks.

### **Military Working Dogs Available for Adoption**

Thanks to a little known law passed in November 2000, military working dogs can be adopted to members of the general public. Debbie Kandoll, who recently adopted a military working dog named Benny, has developed a website to help people learn more about the adoption process. To learn more about Debbie and Benny's story, please visit [http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/03/military\\_dogs\\_032208w//](http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/03/military_dogs_032208w//) <http://www.militaryworkingdogadoptions.com>

### **Guitars for Vets Program**

Guitars for Vets is a nonprofit organization established to help ailing and injured veterans by providing free guitars and musical instruction. Dan Van Buskik, one of the founders, credits his guitar playing with helping him manage his Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from Vietnam, and hopes music will help other veterans. If you would like to donate musical equipment or find out more about the organization, visit <http://guitarsforvets.org>.

### **Free Video/Email Services for Angels**

**Blackbook2.com and The Veterans Corporation offer free online video, email, and conferencing services to Soldiers' Angels.**

Through the technology of Blackbook2.com, The Veterans Corporation can connect Soldiers' Angels with people around the world through free email, video IM, and video-conferencing services. **Veterans and current military personnel are also eligible** for the free services, making them ideal for Angels who want to keep in even closer touch with their adoptees, or Soldiers' Angels teams who are working on projects while separated by the miles.

To access these services, go to Blackbook2.com and sign up at this link only: <http://www.blackbook2.com/?allforvets>

### **Foundations Provide Emergency Assistance to Troops and Families**

**The American Soldier Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) public non-profit organization created to assist Soldiers, their family members, and military survivors. The Foundation can provide grants or interest-free loans for food, rent or utilities, medical expenses, and other needs. <http://www.soldierfoundation.org>.

**The Wounded EOD Warrior Foundation** is a non profit 501(c) 3 organization that provides funds and support to EOD military families caring for their loved ones at military medical facilities. The support provided can include plane fare, accommodations, food vouchers or other associated travel expenses. Eligible families can also use benefits for other necessities such as childcare, mortgage and rent relief while visiting Servicemembers. Visit the Foundation website at <http://www.woundedeodwarrior.org/>

## **Military OneSource Tax filing service**

### Military OneSource Tax Filing Services

Military OneSource tax consultants are available by calling **1-800-730-3802** and by [e-mail](#) to help you with personal tax-related questions and financial planning.

### TaxCut

TaxCut Basic Online® by H&R Block is free to active duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members and their families. To access this free service provided by the Department of Defense, you must be **registered and logged in to the Military OneSource Web site.**

- [Register for a Military OneSource Account](#)  
If you have never created a Military OneSource Web site account, please register for an account.
- [Login to your Military OneSource Account](#)  
If you have already created a Military OneSource account but are not currently logged in, please log in now.
- [Go to TaxCut](#)  
If you are **registered and logged in** to the Military OneSource web site, you can access H&R Block TaxCut Basic Online. You will not be able to view this page if you are not logged in.

<https://www.militaryonesource.com/>

-

## **Veterans starting Businesses**

There are some resources for veterans that are interested in starting a business. We thought we would highlight a few of them.

**Patriot Express Loan Initiative from the Small Business Administration (SBA)** - The new Patriot Express loan is offered by SBA's network of participating lenders nationwide and features our fastest turnaround time for loan approvals. Loans are available up to \$500,000 and qualify for SBA's maximum guaranty of up to 85 percent for loans of \$150,000 or less and up to 75 percent for loans over \$150,000 up to \$500,000. For loans above \$350,000, lenders are required to take all available collateral. The Patriot Express loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases. Patriot Express loans feature SBA's lowest interest rates for business loans, generally 2.25 percent to 4.75 percent over prime depending upon the size and maturity of the loan. Your local SBA district office will have a listing of Patriot Express lenders in your area. Go to <http://www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/> for more information.

**Veteran Resource Information @ VetBiz.gov** - A Veteran Resource Information web site designed to assist veteran entrepreneurs who want to start and expand their businesses in the Federal and private marketplace. This site provides up to the minute information from the Federal Government as it pertains to Service Disabled and Veteran Owned Small Businesses. The service is provided FREE to anyone who served in the



active military, naval or air service, and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable. Go to [www.vetbiz.gov](http://www.vetbiz.gov) for more information.

**US Dept of VA Small Business Resources @ VetSuccess.gov** - This US Dept. of Veterans Affairs website purpose is to present information about the services that the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program provides to veterans with service-connected disabilities. They also have information on small business resources. Go to <http://www.vetsuccess.gov/bizres/> for more information.

**The Veterans Corporation** - The National Veterans Business Development Corporation, doing business as The Veterans Corporation, is a Federally-chartered 501(c)(3) organization that was created by Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999. This Act recognized that America "has done too little to assist Veterans...in playing a greater role in the economy of the United States". The Corporation is charged with creating and enhancing entrepreneurial business opportunities for Veterans, including Service-Disabled Veterans. TVC provides Veterans including Service Disabled Veterans with the tools and resources they need to be successful in business:

- Access to Capital
- Access to Business Services
- Entrepreneurial Education
- Surety Bonding
- Insurance and Prescription Coverage
- Veterans Business Directory

Go to [www.veteranscorp.org](http://www.veteranscorp.org) for more information.

**Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan (MREIDL) - Small Businesses that are owned by military reservists (National Guard and Reserve Members) and/or small businesses that employ military reservists called to active duty may qualify for Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loans (MREIDL). Go to [www.sba.gov/reservists/disloan.html](http://www.sba.gov/reservists/disloan.html) for more information.**

**M - Minnesota Veterans website**  
**"One Stop Website" for Minnesota veterans now online**  
**1-888-LinkVet (1-888-546-5838)**

Education, Benefits, Employment, Medical resources and information on new web site ~  
St. Paul – Minnesota veterans now have a "One Stop Web site" for information about education, medical, employment, and other benefits.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs announced that the new site features links and information from sources that provide goods and services to veterans and their families. The various programs span dozens of agencies across state, federal and local governments as well as private and non-profit organizations.

“We are committed to ensuring that veterans, their dependents and survivors receive the full measure of benefits and services to which they are entitled,” said Clark Dyrud, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. “This new Web site consolidates important information geared toward helping veterans in one easy to find location.”

Information concerning military retirement, state and federal benefits, as well as education and pending legislation are just a few topics that can be found on this new site.

Governor Pawlenty proposed the Veterans One Stop Website as part of his comprehensive military and veterans support legislative package earlier this year.

<http://www.mdva.state.mn.us>

**M – 12 November 2007** Governor Pawlenty announces 35 initiatives that support veterans and the military. \$51 million dollar package includes military income and pension tax exemption.

<http://www.mdva.state.mn.us/news/2008MilitaryandVeteransSupportPackagePressRelease.pdf>

**M - Jan 3, 2007** - [\\$59 per month credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone](#)

<http://www.minnesotaveteran.org/news/2007/Governor8Jan07.htm>

[www.minnesotaveteran.org](http://www.minnesotaveteran.org)

[www.mdva.state.mn.us](http://www.mdva.state.mn.us)

**M Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) waives application fee for active duty members deployed overseas**

At the April, 2007 Leadership Council meeting, system college and university presidents agreed to waive or not charge any future application fees for active duty military service members deployed overseas. Therefore, effective immediately for prospective applicants, we are asking all colleges and universities to waive or not charge an application fee to active duty military service members deployed overseas.

For more information:

[www.mdva.state.mn.us/PDFs/MnSCUApplicationFee.pdf](http://www.mdva.state.mn.us/PDFs/MnSCUApplicationFee.pdf)

## **Military.com Benefits**

### **Veterans' Benefit Expiration Dates**

Veterans are entitled to a number of valuable benefits but did you know that many of these benefits have expiration dates? For example, the Montgomery GI Bill for Active-Duty (MGIB) expires 10 years from date of last discharge or release from active duty. To learn more about veteran's benefits, eligibility requirements, and expiration dates visit Military.com:

<http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/veterans-benefit-expiration-dates>

### **New Behavioral Health Website Offers Answers**

This Web site provides resources and information regarding mental well-being for Soldiers and their family members. Provided by the U.S. Army Medical Department, it is intended for interested Soldiers, family members, the public, news media and Army Medical Department Beneficiaries.

<http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/>

### **M - Operation Minnesota Nice**

Provides packages and cell phone minutes to deployed soldiers

<http://www.operationminnesotanice.com/>

### **M - Minnesota Military Family Foundation 763-544-2255**

Provides community-supported funds to soldiers and their families as grants or loans to Minnesota Military Families of deployed soldiers that need a little help.

<http://www.minnesotamilitaryfamilyfoundation.org/>

### **M - Minnesota Military Appreciation Fund 1-877-668-4269**

MMAF is a state-wide fund raising initiative by the citizens of Minnesota for Minnesota Military personnel and their families. Founded by area business and community leaders, MMAF calls upon citizens to show support and appreciation for the sacrifices by Minnesota Military personnel deployed in combat zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001

MMAF shows our troops how much we appreciate their service by providing cash grants to all soldiers, and to the families of soldiers killed in combat. It shows the nation we are a proud state dedicated to our troops.

\$5,000 awarded to families of those killed in combat

\$2,000 to \$10,000 awarded to all Purple Heart recipients. The amount varies according to the severity of injury.

\$500.00 awarded to all Minnesota military personnel who served in a combat zone. If the soldier received a initial grant of \$250.00, he will automatically be sent an additional \$250.00.

MMAF P.O. Box 2070, Minneapolis, MN 55402

<http://www.thankmntroops.org>

### **M - Support Our Troops**

Provides listing of programs to assist soldiers

<http://www.defensealliance.com/support.html>

## **M - Support Our Troops License Plates**

### **Driver and Vehicle Services**

445 Minnesota Street • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 Phone: 651.296.6911 • Fax: 651.296.2224 • TTY: 651.282.6555 [www.dps.state.mn.us](http://www.dps.state.mn.us)

The new Support Our Troops plate provides Minnesotans with an opportunity to show their pride while they provide support to the families of military personnel and needy and homeless veterans in Minnesota. They do this through a contribution that is paid when the plate is purchased and each time tabs are renewed.

### **Support Our Troops license plates:**

- ⤴ May be displayed on passenger vehicles, one-ton pickups and recreational vehicles
- ⤴ Coming in spring of 2006 – Support Our Troops plates for motorcycles
- ⤴ Plates with disability emblems for passenger vehicles will be mailed to qualified applicants
- ⤴ Support Our Troops plates may not be personalized
- ⤴ Support Our Troops license plates use a flat-plate process developed by 3M and do not have raised letters and numbers like the ones on standard Minnesota license plates

### **How to obtain Support Our Troops license plates:**

- ⤴ In person – Starting today, passenger plates are available at more than 170 deputy registrar offices located throughout the state. Plates for one-ton pickups and recreational vehicles will be available by the end of the week.
- ⤴ By mail – Complete a Special Plate Application, available online at [www.mndriveinfo.org](http://www.mndriveinfo.org) or by calling 651-487-6677, and submit with applicable fees directly to DVS at 445 Minnesota Street Suite 164, St. Paul, MN 55101

### **Fees**

- ⤴ Plate fee: \$10
- ⤴ Minimum contribution: \$30, at time of application and each time tabs are purchased
- ⤴ Filing Fee: \$8.50

### **Contribution**

- ⤴ Minimum contribution is \$30; applicant may choose to make a larger donation
- ⤴ Contribution is tax deductible
- ⤴ Contribution is split between the Department of Military Affairs for financial support of military families and the Department of Veteran Affairs for grant programs for homeless and needy veterans.

Need more information? Contact us at 651-4TROOPS (651-487-6677) or visit us on the Web at [www.mndriveinfo.org](http://www.mndriveinfo.org).

Provides deployed soldiers grants up to \$2000.00 annually for assistance during periods of financial hardships through the sale of vehicle license plates available to all

Minnesotans. Cost is \$48.50 of which \$30.00, half goes to veterans and half goes to deployed soldiers and their families. The license is red, white, and blue with a Bald Eagle and American Flag. Support Our Troops license plates available for cars, light trucks & motorcycles.

<http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dvs/>

### **SAVE - Suicide Awareness Voices of Education/Treat Depression (Emergency call 1-800-273-8255)**

**SAVE's Mission** is to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, eliminate stigma and serve as a resource to those touched by suicide. Please contact a medical professional if the information here leads you to believe you or someone you know may be depressed.

<http://www.save.org/>

### **M Ladies of Liberty Females Supporting Deployed Troops.**

Local support for North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana female service members specifically and their families, and support for .LoL. members and their deployed service member and family.

We also offer support to the wounded service members and their families and families of the *Killed in Action*.

Join us!

Facebook option or

E-mail: [theLadiesofLiberty@gmail.com](mailto:theLadiesofLiberty@gmail.com)

### **M - Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans (V4V) Trust Fund**

A trust fund called "MN Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund" has been established.

The goal of the trust fund is to help Minnesota Veterans integrate into society and lead healthier, independent lives by funding recreational, employment, health, education and social programs for veterans, their families and caregivers.

Applications for grants are now being accepted.

<http://www.mdva.state.mn.us/mnv4v.htm>

### **Warrior Navigation and Assistance Program Launched**

Humana Military Healthcare Services (HMHS) has launched the Warrior Navigation & Assistance Program (WNAP) to support active duty, Guard and Reserve Service

members and their families during transition. The program offers person-to-person guidance and access to a new advocacy unit to assist Service members in obtaining access to care or information on resources. Additionally this new specialized unit will oversee education and assistance initiatives for civilian providers caring for Service Members and their families. One attribute of the dedicated unit is a toll-free number for Service Members in transition and their families. This telephone number, 1-888-4GO-WNAP, provides direct access to a multi-disciplinary team who will assist Service members and/or family members in problem solving and other needed medical or community resources.

<http://www.humana-military.com/South/corporatecomm/CurrentReleases/11162007.htm>]

## **Military Spouse Website Launched**

Military Spouse magazine has just launched a new online venture. The website features daily content, blogs written by Military Spouse Magazine columnists and topical experts, forums for spouses to discuss their experiences, a recipe portal that allows spouses to share meal ideas, and the opportunity to share stories. Visit the site at

<http://www.milspousemag.com>

## **GoArmyEd**



Lead by example. An educated Soldier is the best asset the Army has. Pursue your educational dreams by using GoArmyEd, the new portal from the Army Continuing Education System (ACES).

**GoArmyEd** is the virtual gateway for Soldiers on active duty to request Tuition Assistance (TA) online, anytime for classroom, distance learning, and eArmyU online college courses.

**GoArmyEd** is a dynamic online portal that automates many of the paper-based processes you historically conducted with your Army Education Counselor.

**GoArmyEd** is your one-stop location for managing your college education and using TA benefits. GoArmyEd gives you access to many regionally accredited colleges and universities and over 1,000 available degree plans.

**GoArmyEd** is also the new way to access eArmyU and its 25 partner colleges and universities and 145 degree and certificate programs, including the eArmyU Technology Package (Laptop) Option.

**GoArmyEd** is used by:



- Soldiers to pursue their postsecondary educational goals
- Army Education Counselors to provide educational guidance
- Colleges to deliver degree and course offerings and to report Soldier progress

Using the GoArmyEd portal for your educational needs puts you one click closer to obtaining the finest education, anywhere you are, anytime you want it.

<http://www.GoArmyEd.com>



### *The community programs that became a National Movement*

Colonial Flag Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit public charity established to assist other charities, causes and community awareness issues in making their message and needs known through patriotic displays of flags and memorials. Strict compliance with non profit, non political non protest principals is the legacy and guarantee of any approved & licensed Healing Field or Field of Honor event. Colonial Flag Foundation assists with planning, organizing, fundraising, promoting and executing of the Healing Field and Field of Honor events while endeavoring to support and enhance local volunteer involvement, charitable support and unity in the host community.

<http://www.healingfield.org/index.php>

### **Rebuild Together**

Good afternoon. I do not recall the Soldier and family name that had the significant mold problem in their house?

But I saw in a recent SEARS flyer that Sears was working in conjunction with "Rebuild Together" on home improvements for Soldiers-so fyi-here are links to the organization and the Heroes at Home program. You can key in a state to get by state POC's:

<http://www.rebuildingtogether.org/>

Specifics on the heroes at home program:

<http://www.rebuildingtogether.org/heroesathome/>

**M – Guardian Angels for Soldier’s Pets (952-894-9264)**

Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pets find loving homes for animals while military personnel are on deployment

[www.guardianangelsforsoldierspets.org](http://www.guardianangelsforsoldierspets.org)

## **M – My Military Education**

Minnesota Veteran Affairs web site that lists all available resources and links for educational benefits to Minnesota soldiers.

<http://www.mymilitaryeducation.org>

## **Army Behavioral Health**

This Web site provides resources and information regarding mental well-being for Soldiers and their family members. Provided by the U.S. Army Medical Department, it is intended for interested Soldiers, family members, the public, news media and Army Medical Department Beneficiaries.

<http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/>

## **M - Operation Jonny Schulze** **The Jonathan Schulze "I Can't Hear You" Foundation** ***Jonny's Mentoring Program Phone: 952-201-2102***

*A Mentor Program for Veterans by Veterans  
You're Not Alone!*

- **Jonny's Mentor Program requirements**
- Mentoring Program Overview
- Locations
- How can you help?

### **Mission:**

Assist Veterans with moving forward in life. We seek Veteran Service Organizations to offer a Jonny's

Mentor Program as part of your Veteran Service.

### **Vision:**

Offer an educational & empowerment Mentoring Program for the new Veteran, family, friends, peers, and the private Veteran Service Organizations. Facilitate, co-ordinate, and move forward on behalf of the Veteran to professional resources.

### **History:**

Jonny served our country in the Marine Corps, earning two Purple Hearts while fighting in the War on Terror. He joined the VFW after his discharge. He became a member of the Color and Honor Guard. He was a very polite young man with a wide smile and a hearty

laugh. Unfortunately, the PTSD and subsequent nightmares did not go away. PTSD beset the young man. After failed treatments and excessive vice - Jonny sought treatment. He was put on a waiting list. He took his own life the following week. The "Mentoring Program" concept was initiated by a fellow veterans, friends, and family. What could we have done differently at our level? This program is what we wish we had for Jonathan and now offer for your Jonny. "I Can't Hear You" is our hedence to hear your Vet.

Organization

**Benefit to Veteran Organizations:**

- A strategic way for your Veteran Service Organization to "tactically take care of your own."
- A 'grass roots' approach to facilitate and coordinate efforts on behalf of the Veteran.
- A means of offering greater value to the Veteran and Support Group.

**Benefit to the Veteran:**

- Talk to a Veteran who understands: "been there, done that."
- All conversations are confidential, there is no duty to disclose.
- You will be provided with the Mentor Book of Veteran Resources.
- You and your Support Group will be offered an empowerment tool to create a strategic plan to move forward.

**Mentor:**

- A Veteran who experienced similar experiences, and has found solace in civilian life.
  - Volunteers to be a Mentor to a new Veteran (to include active duty and reserve individuals).
  - Understands the importance of trust and confidentiality.
  - Supplied with a Mentor's Book of Veteran's Resources and the Mentor Training Modules and Capsules.
  - Facilitates and coordinates the Veteran and the Support Group moving forward with a Strategic Plan, and Tactical Goals to proper, professional services.
- Mentors will NOT be expected to diagnose, recommend, or treat the Veteran and/or the Support Group; but facilitate & coordinate efforts to move the Veteran forward to available, professional resources. Jonny's Mentoring Program - A program for Vet's, provided by Vet's.

The Mentoring Program consists of 3 main components: Support Group:

- Honesty, Trust, and Confidentiality
- Educate on Veteran Issues
- Create a Communication Tree
- Meet when requested
- Mobilize in event of crisis
- Empower the Support Group
- Create their own Strategic Plan and

**Tactical Goals in support of the Veteran.**

- Move forward on behalf of the Veteran, "what is the one thing I can do to assist the Veteran?"

Moving forward in unison Training Modules and Capsules:

Introduction and Overview:

- Mentor Book of Veteran Resources
- Training Modules and Capsules
- 1. Choosing Reality • Addressing Veteran Needs
- 2. Belief Structure and Paradigms • Balancing Beliefs and Behavior
- 3. Bridges and Barriers • Being Pro-Active
- 4. Behavior: - Predicted Outcome • Strategic Plan and Tactical Goals
- 5. Results take time to Measure • Execution and Follow-up
- 6. Needs Change over Time • Keeping Score

Copyright 2007 Jonny's Mentor Program. All Rights

Reserved.

Copyright 2007 Franklin Covey. All Rights Reserved.

E-mail: [operationjonnyschulze@yahoo.com](mailto:operationjonnyschulze@yahoo.com)

Visit our website for additional information

<http://www.jonathanschulze.com>



## **M-Project EverGreen**

### **GreenCare for Troops: Serving You While You Serve Us**

Project EverGreen is launching a nationwide outreach program connecting local lawn and landscape firms with men and women serving our country in the armed forces away from home.

Lawn and landscape maintenance becomes a definite hardship when a family's major breadwinner is on active duty away from home. GreenCare for Troops is designed to show the green industry's concern for this situation, helping affected families maintain their homes' green spaces.

While Project Evergreen's GreenCare for Troops program continues its mission to help our military families, we hope that 2007 will bring PEACE to everyone.

### **Military Families**

Interested in participating? [CLICK HERE](#) to apply. We will refer your application to a

participating lawn and landscape contractor in your area.

Questions? Please call us toll-free at (877) 758-4835.

\*GreenCare for Troops services are based upon participating contractors and are not guaranteed everywhere. If there is not a contractor currently signed up in your region, Project EverGreen will make every effort to find and assign a contractor to your family.

### **Lawn and Landscape Contractors**

Interested in helping? [CLICK HERE](#) to order the free "MissionKit." The MissionKit includes easy-to-implement instructions, complete with marketing and promotional materials and a business blueprint for efficiently launching the program in your local market.

The MissionKit is free to all lawn and landscape contractors who would like to participate. If you are not already a Project EverGreen donor, a voluntary contribution is appreciated.

### **Citizen Volunteers**

Interested in helping one or more military families in your area?

[CLICK HERE](#) to volunteer. We will refer your application to a family in your area.

Questions? Please call us toll-free at (877) 758-4835 Ask for Joy Westenberg. Or e-mail her for more information at [joywestenberg@projectevergreen.com](mailto:joywestenberg@projectevergreen.com)

<http://www.projectevergreen.com/mediaroom/greencare.html>

### **88<sup>th</sup> Blue Devil Association**

Nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization that provides financial assistance for the soldiers in the 88<sup>th</sup> RRC and their families in the 6 state region of the 88<sup>th</sup> RRC to include Minnesota. Requests for assistance are identified through the chain of command and the 88<sup>th</sup> RRC Family Support Program. The Blue Devil Association approves the financial assistance and provides the funding. Contact the 88<sup>th</sup> RRC, DCS, G1 Chaplain's office: attention MAJ. Kathleen Couillard at 612-713-3082.

<http://www.bluedevilassociation.org>

### **M - Minnesota Family Assistance Centers 1-888-234-1274**

Minnesota National Guard has set up 11 FAC to provide information source for TRICARE, DEERS, points of contact for legal & pay issues, financial counseling/training, points of contacts for community support, emergency assistance coordination, site for family communication, support/mentor Family Readiness Groups

<http://www.dma.state.mn.us/familyprograms/soldierfamilyasst.htm>

### **Locate a Center**

#### **Bemidji**

1430 23rd Street NW  
Bemidji, MN 56601

#### **Mankato**

100 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.  
507-382-8252

(218) 755-4750  
[FACBemidji@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACBemidji@mn.ngb.army.mil)

[FACMankato@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACMankato@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**Brooklyn Park**  
5500 85th Ave. N  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443  
(763) 424-6392  
[FACBrooklynPark@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACBrooklynPark@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**Marshall**  
500 Timmerman Drive  
Marshall, MN 56258  
(651) 268-8475  
(320) 295-3741  
[FACMarshall@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACMarshall@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**Camp Ripley**  
Bldg 15-1  
Little Falls, MN 56345  
(320) 616-3117  
[FACCampRipley@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACCampRipley@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**New Ulm**  
205 N Broadway St.  
New Ulm, MN 56073  
(651) 268-8543  
[FACNewUlm@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACNewUlm@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**Cottage Grove**  
8180 Belden Blvd  
Cottage Grove, MN 55016-2645  
(651) 268-8200  
1-888-234-1274

**Rosemount**  
13865 S. Robert Trail  
Rosemount, MN 55068  
(651) 282-4748  
[FACRosemount@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACRosemount@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**Duluth**  
4015 Airpark Blvd  
Duluth, MN 55811  
(218) 723-4852  
[FACDuluth@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACDuluth@mn.ngb.army.mil)

**St. Paul**  
133 Airlift Wing  
631 Minuteman Dr.  
St Paul, MN 55111-4116  
(612) 713-2367  
[jill.lawrence@mnstpa.af.mil](mailto:jill.lawrence@mnstpa.af.mil)

148th Fighter Wing  
4680 Viper St.  
Duluth, MN  
(218) 788-7833  
[Jennifer.kuhlman@mndulu.af.mil](mailto:Jennifer.kuhlman@mndulu.af.mil)

### **M - Minnesota Proclamation May is Hire A Veteran Month**

Governor Proclaims May "Hire a Veteran Month". Governor Tim Pawlenty signed an official proclamation declaring May as "Hire a Veteran Month."

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/news/release/2005/wd02May05govern.htm>

### **M - Veterans Employment Services 651-296-1194**

Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

<http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/>

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/veterans/vso.htm>

### **HireVetsFirst**

The HireVetsFirst website will direct you to one of more than 2,000 one-Stop Career Centers nationwide. While you 're there, watch a video about how easy it is to hire veterans

Log on to [www.HireVetsFirst.go](http://www.HireVetsFirst.go) and click Hire A Veteran Now! Enter your zip code and the One-Stop Career Center nearest you will come up



Call the number listed and ask for Local Veterans Outreach Program specialist or Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist. They will be ready to assist you in making connections with highly trained veterans.

<http://www.HireVetsFirst.gov>

### **Military Spouse JobSearch**

Military Spouse JobSearch is designed to enhance the employment opportunities for spouses of US Military members with employers committed to hiring military spouses and to connect employers with a talented, global, diverse workforce.

<http://www.militaryspousejobsearch.org/msjs/app>

### **Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative**

AUSA Family Programs recently attended the launch of the Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative. The Initiative is designed to advance military spouses into portable careers by providing them with education and training in high-growth, high-demand occupations. Career Advancement Accounts are flexible education funding accounts to pay for expenses directly related to post-secondary education and training, including tuition, fees, books, equipment, and credentialing and licensing fees.

The Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Defense (DoD) are jointly investing \$35 million in eight states demonstrating this initiative (California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, North Carolina, and Washington) targeting 18 military installations. Voluntary Education Centers and One-Stop Career Centers will collaborate to provide career counseling, guidance and assessments to support military spouse career and education choices.

Teams of DoD and DOL staff have jointly trained participating installation and state/local community workforce staff on partnership implementation and will be providing ongoing technical assistance. The first accounts will be issued to allow training to begin in January 2008 to coincide with the education enrollment cycle. For more information on eligibility for the Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative, as well as the application process, please

visit [http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF\\_DETAIL\\_0?content\\_id=242564](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_0?content_id=242564)



### **[America's Job Bank](http://www.ajbo.org)**

America's Job Bank (AJB) is a component of the One-Stop Career Center network. Here you can post job listings, create customized job orders and search resumes to find veterans highly trained in all types of skills

<http://www.ajbo.org>

### **USAJOBS**

USAJOBS, created by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, is the official job site of the Federal Government. Here you can create and post job listings for positions with the Federal Government as well as search for veterans.

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>

## **Army Reserve: Voluntary Education Services**

**What is it?** Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services is a Department of Defense program for which the Army Reserve Command serves as the Executive Agent. The program is executed through commanders for Regional Readiness Commands worldwide. The basic tenet of Voluntary Education Services is to provide lifelong learning opportunities for Selected Reserve Soldiers that enhance their personal and professional development. Voluntary Education Services enhances recruitment, retention, and readiness of the Army Reserve.

**What has the Army Reserve done?** The Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services program has provided an array of education opportunities and support since its inception. These programs and support include:

- Tuition Assistance (\$250 per semester hour - \$4,500 annual cap)
- Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 1606 and Chapter 1607 for OIF/OEF veterans)
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Testing Program (CLEP and DSST)
- Student Guide to Success
- Credit for Military Experience
- Certification and Licensure
- Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS)
- Troops to Teachers Program
- Spouse to Teachers Program

**What efforts does the Army Reserve plan to continue in the future?** The Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services was identified by the Chief, Army Reserve, as a Soldier priority for FY06. The Army Reserve is poised to streamline and enhance the Army Reserve Tuition Assistance program to ensure all eligible Soldiers are able to receive financial assistance. Army Reserve Education Services Specialists will continue to provide Soldiers with guidance and assistance in planning their education to enhance their military careers and make them more competitive in the civilian job market. In addition, the Army Reserve Voluntary Education Services will continue to partner with DANTES to provide professional certification and licensure examinations to Soldiers, spouses and Civilians.