

**Revised 1 June 2011**

**The following Programs that assist Soldiers and their families in Minnesota compliments of Minnesota Army Reserve Ambassador's Tom Haugo and Jim Lundell.**

**Corrections or additions please email me at [thaugo@bachmans.com](mailto:thaugo@bachmans.com) or call me at work at 612-861-7677**

**NOTE: \*\* Red indicates change/new since 1 May 2011**

**M – indicates specific program that help Minnesota Soldiers and their families**

### **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.ausa.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>.

## **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~,C10n3-GqPXFAdNv94CEJynLDP7XRS7HF&bclid=6973228001&bctid=822873628001](http://www.army.mil/media/amp/?bcpid=6981683001&bcpid=42804633001&bckey=AQ~~,AAAAAG_GHPw~,C10n3-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/bonuscenter>.

### **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](http://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.it4uservices.com](http://www.it4uservices.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.prnewswire.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.

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### **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 HealtheVet**

My HealtheVet 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 HealtheVet 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://205.168.45.52/), 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 World War 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-Terminal 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 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://HonorFlightTwinCities.org)  
ATTN: Jerry Kyser  
2674 Mackubin Street  
Roseville, MN 55113

**HONOR FLIGHTS National Website**  
[www.HonorFlight.org](http://www.HonorFlight.org)  
(937) 521-2400

### **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-to-Family&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://metrojrads.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 [rmtoenni@syr.edu](mailto:rmtoenni@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.guardinangelsforsoldierspet.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, raise awareness about mental health, and connect those in need to available resources. To take the self-assessment, go to: <http://www.militarymentalhealth.org/Welcome.aspx>

### **Pay Tool Helps Wounded Warriors**

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) recently launched their latest tool to help medically retired Wounded Warriors understand how their retirement pay, disability compensation, and Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) pay rates are determined. The "Medical Disability Retired Pay Income Estimator," tool coupled with a detailed online PowerPoint tutorial can help explain how the combined post-retirement income payment rates are determined. To learn more, go to: <http://www.military.com/veterans-report/new-pay-tool-helps-wounded-warriors>

## **M - Twin City Honor Flight**

On May 22, a Twin Cities Honor Flight will depart for Washington DC at 6:30 AM, via Sun Country Airlines.

The Twin Cities Honor Flight is sponsoring another flight for 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, A 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.

Trained Guardians will be on the trip to escort the 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.

### **Twin Cities Honor Flight**

c/o Jerry Kyser  
2674 Mackubin Street  
Roseville, MN 55113  
Home/Office: 651-481-8835  
Cell: 651-338-2717  
Email: CrazyJerry45@hotmail.com  
or Jan Kyser jkyser@steven-scott.com

### **HONOR FLIGHT APPLICATIONS**

National Web site  
www.HonorFlight.org  
937-521-2400

## **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://www.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?PgmID=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.

Individuals currently serving in the military do not qualify for the credit.

***What is a nonrefundable 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.

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.

***How does a nonrefundable credit compare with an income tax subtraction?***

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/CYSSTutor>. 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>



## DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

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:](#)

You must be registered and logged into this site ([www.arfp.org](http://www.arfp.org)). After you have registered and logged into the site, please click the link below to view the events schedule. From this page, you will be able to select the event you wish to register for.

[www.arfp.org/yr-events](http://www.arfp.org/yr-events)

## **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 Mother's 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.com)

### **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](#)

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| Civilian | Uniformed Services |
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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.wonguardonline.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)

### **Lades 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: wfsupport@conus.army.mil](mailto:wfsupport@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&nbsp;

Big Bend, Texas:&nbsp; Back packing and Cayoneering

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. 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://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://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).

<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/>

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#### **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/heroessathome/>

**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

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Reserved.

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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  
(218) 755-4750  
[FACBemidji@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACBemidji@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)

### **Camp Ripley**

Bldg 15-1  
Little Falls, MN 56345  
(320) 616-3117  
[FACCampRipley@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACCampRipley@mn.ngb.army.mil)

### **Cottage Grove**

8180 Belden Blvd  
Cottage Grove, MN 55016-2645  
(651) 268-8200  
1-888-234-1274

### **Duluth**

4015 Airpark Blvd  
Duluth, MN 55811  
(218) 723-4852  
[FACDuluth@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACDuluth@mn.ngb.army.mil)

148th Fighter Wing  
4680 Viper St.  
Duluth, MN  
(218) 788-7833  
[Jennifer.kuhlman@mndulu.ang.af.mil](mailto:Jennifer.kuhlman@mndulu.ang.af.mil)

### **Mankato**

100 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.  
507-382-8252  
[FACMankato@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACMankato@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)

### **New Ulm**

205 N Broadway St.  
New Ulm, MN 56073  
(651) 268-8543  
[FACNewUlm@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACNewUlm@mn.ngb.army.mil)

### **Rosemount**

13865 S. Robert Trail  
Rosemount, MN 55068  
(651) 282-4748  
[FACRosemount@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:FACRosemount@mn.ngb.army.mil)

### **St. Paul**

133 Airlift Wing  
631 Minuteman Dr.  
St Paul, MN 55111-4116  
(612) 713-2367  
[jill.lawrence@mnstpa.ang.af.mil](mailto:jill.lawrence@mnstpa.ang.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**

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.

**Why is this important to the Army Reserve?** 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 developing a Soldier to reach his or her potential. The Army Reserve understands that an educated Soldier is better equipped to handle the tactical and technical challenges facing our Army today and, therefore, views education as one of the best enhancements possible in developing an Army of capable and determined warriors to defend our Nation.

#### **M - Minnesota Department of Revenue**

##### **Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone** (September 11, 2001 – December 2006)

The credit is equal to \$59.00 for each month of service. For information and assistance completing Form M99 or Form M99-D, call 651-296-3781 or email [indinctax@state.mn.us](mailto:indinctax@state.mn.us) Forms are available in November 2006 call 651-296-4444 to have the forms mailed to you or go to website to download a copy.

<http://www.taxes.state.mn.us>

#### **M - Comfort for Courage**

Veterans Transition Center at the University of Minnesota is first of kind resource center for returning student vets, and was founded by Comfort for Courage, Minnesota's up and coming student-based organization that supports our nation's heroes.

<http://www.comfortforcourage.org>

#### **M - Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC) @ Minneapolis/St Paul Airport**

Volunteers staff the center 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. It is privately funded by donations from military and veterans' organizations. The mission of the AFSC is to provide assistance to traveling active duty soldiers at the Minneapolis/Saint Paul International Airport. The AFSC provide snacks, beverages, sleeping facilities for both men & women soldiers, big screen TV, internet access and fax support, cell phones, magazines and books for reading while the soldiers wait for connecting transportation. In addition, the volunteers meet wounded warriors and redeploying soldiers at the gates providing them with MN Twin baseball hats, snacks and welcome home cake. To donate funds or to volunteer call 612-726-9156 or email:

DebraLCain@aol.com

<http://www.mnafsc.org>

**Welcome to MyArmyBenefits**

This is your official Army benefits resource for the Regular Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Family Members and Retirees. *MyArmyBenefits* is your one-stop shop for the latest, most-up-to-date benefits information.

Browse through benefits and entitlements including those provided by the states and territories. Discover your eligibility, research the details of your benefits and find locations where benefits services are provided. If you still have questions, please contact us.

Active duty AKO account holders who log into the *My Benefits* section can produce personalized reports that use their DEERS data to calculate survivor, education and retirement benefits, annuities and lump-sum payments. Add investments, insurance and SGLI or use the "what if" capability to see the impacts of marriage, having children or retiring at a projected date and rank to complete your financial picture.

New features serving the Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Program and Casualty and Survivor Assistance will be available soon.

- **Benefit Resources-** Local benefit resources at all major Army installations worldwide.
- **Survivor Planning-** A calculator that projects the Family's benefits as they would be delivered to the Soldier's beneficiaries.
- **Retirement Planning-** A calculator to "project" your retirement. Both the Retirement and the Survivor Planning features allow Soldiers to perform "what if" drills to see how one's retirement is affected by performance over a period of time.
- **Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Assistance-** A calculator and interactive tool to calculate a Soldier's estimated disability rating and disability retirement income based upon combat and combat-related injuries as listed.
- **Casualty and Survivor Assistance-** This feature enables Casualty Assistance Officers to provide surviving Family members with a clear, accurate and integrated benefits report.
- **Fact Sheets-** Customized by Army component and Soldier status, these fact sheets contain essential benefits information on more than 100 topics. They are available in both English and Spanish. Additionally, 54 state and territory fact sheets identify specific benefits and eligibilities for Soldiers residing in those states and territories  
<http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/EN/default.aspx>

### **MyArmyLifeToo (MALT) Web System – the Website of Choice for Army Families**

**What is it?** The MyArmyLifeToo Web Portal is a Web site that highlights Family Programs services in Army Community Service, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve Family Programs. It is written in easily understood language for Family members versus Army terms, acronyms and program names. It is the face of Family Programs and serves as the Web site of choice for information on programs and services. To date, there are over 66,000 registered users.

**What has the Army done?** Prior to establishing MyArmyLifeToo (MALT) in 2001, there was no single portal to provide “official” information to Army Families. Although a plethora of general Web sites existed, none were sponsored by the Department of the Army. The MALT was created to serve as a “one-stop” knowledge center designed especially for Family members and is sponsored by the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) Family Programs (FP) Directorate.

The Web site is easy to navigate with most information available for the user within four clicks. Users who register on the site receive the monthly newsletter, Family News. The site is publicly accessible thus available to all Soldiers and to immediate and extended Family members.

**What efforts does the Army plan to continue in the future?** The Army will continue to improve the navigation and add features to the MALT such as the virtual Soldier Family Assistance Center.

Why is this important to the Army? **The Army’s goal is to give Soldiers and Family members one primary place or single portal to access information about Army life – from Army customs, home and personal safety to managing deployment and understanding military pay. Individuals who register at MyArmyLifetoo.com get the most up-to-date information about the Army’s support resources.**

<http://www.myarmylifetoo.com>

#### **USA4MilitaryFamilies**

Many issues surrounding quality of life and family well being can only be addressed by states. Much progress has been made on several of these key issues. Currently, efforts are being focused on spouse employment, including unemployment compensation for transferring military spouses, in-state tuition allowances, financial readiness, education, and the pressing needs of severely injured Service members and their families. Many state leaders share our concern for the welfare of our Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve service members and their families living within their borders, and we look forward to making significant progress in 2005-2006.

#### Resource Information

##### **Organizational Links**

[States](#)

##### **Resource Information**

[Family Centers](#)

Federal Agencies  
Nonprofits  
Industries  
DoD  
Army  
Navy  
Marine Corps  
Air Force  
Coast Guard  
National Guard  
Reserves

Military OneSource  
Personal Finances  
Adult Education  
K-12 Education  
Child Care  
Exceptional Family Member  
Spouse Employment  
Deployment Support

**Information About Families**

**Administrative Resources**

Collaboration Suite  
Regional Coordinator Forum

Active Duty Families  
Guard and Reserve Families

<http://www.USA4militaryfamilies.org>

**Army Well-Being 1-800-833-6622**

**Mission:** Providing for the Well-Being of the Army Family is a fundamental leadership obligation. Army Well-Being holistically integrates and continuously assesses services and programs, which provide for the needs of the Army's people and supports senior leaders in determining priorities in support of their Joint Warfighting human capabilities requirements.

**Vision:** Army Well-Being accomplishes this mission by providing an integrated systems approach to sustain and improve the Well-Being and Quality of Life of the Army's people to maximize readiness and mission performance. This integrated systems approach is composed of seven specific sub-objectives — Pay and Compensation; Health Care; Housing and Workplace Environment; Family Support; Education and Development; Cohesion; and Operational and Special Interest.

<http://www.armywellbeing.org>

**The US Army's Freedom Team Salute**

It is a great way for soldiers to thank their families and employers for the strength and the support they have shown by sending them a Freedom Team Salute Commendation package. As a symbol of our nations appreciation for their service, all Army Veterans are eligible to receive a Freedom Team Salute Commendation package.

Freedom Team Salute honorees will receive:

**An official US Army Lapel Pin**

**A US Army Decal**

**A Certificate of Appreciation signed by both the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff**

**A letter of thanks signed by the both the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff.**

<http://www.freedomsalute.com>

**Military One Source (USER ID: military / PASSWORD: onesource) 1-800-342-9647**

Provides 24/7/365 information to soldiers and their families. Military One Source is a virtual extension of existing installation services. Provides assistance in parenting & child care, personal & family readiness, education, midlife & retirement, disability, financial, legal, everyday issues, work, health, emotional well-being, addiction & recovery. Counseling service available by phone or in person in your local community. Grief, marital issues, stress, and adjustment to deployment are available at no cost to soldier and their primary family members. Up to 6 counseling are free per family member.

One can also subscribe to the Military One Source Newsletter.

New feature: Currently providing TurboTax service at no cost to the soldiers by the Department. Of Defense. Log on to access your W-2's at

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

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

**M -Parenting Education Resources** (University of Minnesota Extension Service)

Supporting Military Families in Minnesota

In Minnesota we have many citizens who serve in the National Guard and Army Reserve. Many of these soldiers, both men and women, have been called to active duty. This means they must leave their communities, jobs and families.



The transitions these soldiers and their families face are challenging. This winter and spring, 3000 Minnesota soldiers are expected to return home from their tours of duty in Iraq and other parts of the globe. These families will be adjusting to a life after deployment.

We are providing you with some resources to help you learn more about the cycle of deployment and how you can support military families in your community.

<http://www.parenting.umn.edu/militaryKids/index.htm>

**Operation Child Care 1-800-424-2246**

Operation Child Care in partnership with the National Association for Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) offers up to six hours of free reunion care Schedule on line at [www.childcare.org](http://www.childcare.org) or call 1-800-424-2246

National Guard and Reserve Members: The childcare community is ready and eager to support you and your family by providing volunteer childcare services. If you've returned home (or if your spouse will be returning home) from Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom for two weeks of R&R leave, you are eligible to receive a minimum of six hours of free childcare.

<http://www.childcareaware.org>

### **The Military Child in Transition and Deployment**

Sesame Workshop and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. with additional support from the New York office of Mental Health (NYSOMH) and Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), have partnered to produce a new project, **Talk, Listen, Connect**. These bilingual kits will help military families and their young children cope with feelings, challenges, and concerns experienced during various phases of deployment: pre-deployment, deployment and homecoming. The kit includes:

- Sesame Street DVD
- A parent/caregiver magazine
- A Children's Activity Poster.

Please visit [www.sesameworkshop.org/tlc](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/tlc) to request your FREE kit or download all the materials! Distribution provided by the Department of Defense through Military OneSource.

<http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/>

### **National Association of Child Care Resources & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)**

A Department of Defense initiative to support the childcare needs of parents who are activated or deployed.

-Helps eligible families locate options in local communities.

-Reduces child care fees of eligible families who are already using licensed or legally operating sponsored community child care programs & providers.

Toll free **1-800-424-2246**

<http://www.NACCRRA.org/MilitaryPrograms>

### **Operation Military Kids (OMK)**

Creating a community support network for children and youth of whose parents are deployed

<http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/omk>

### **Operation Purple Summer Camp**

The National Military Family Association has announced that Army Reserve Child and Youth Services (CYS) were chosen to host 4 of the popular Operation Purple Summer Camps in 2006. NMFA developed this free summer camp programs in response to the need for increased support for military children, especially those whose parents are or will be deployed. The Army Reserve CYS team will join a select list of dedicated teams to host more than 2,500 deserving children at 26 locations in 22 states.

Applications will be available only online. Registration begins March 15<sup>th</sup> and ends May 1<sup>st</sup>. Visit the NMFA Operation Purple web site:

<http://www.operationpurple.org>

### **Military Personnel Offered Free Admission to Adventure Parks**

Any active duty, activated or drilling reservist, or National Guardsman is entitled to free admission under *Anheuser-Busch's "Here's to the Heroes" program*.

He or she need only register online ([www.herosalute.com](http://www.herosalute.com)), or in the entrance plaza of participating parks, and show a Department of Defense photo ID. As many as three direct dependents of military personnel also are entitled to free admission.

Dependents may take advantage of the offer without their service member, though an adult must accompany minor dependents. Busch Gardens Williamsburg and Sea World San Antonio are seasonal operations that will remain closed until spring 2006.

Military personnel interested in visiting those parks should check operating schedules. For Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Sea World San Antonio, Sesame Place. The remaining parks, Sea World Orlando, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and Sea World San Diego are open year round.

Offer valid for one complimentary single-day admission per person, per year, to one of the following Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks: Sea World Orlando, San Diego, or San Antonio, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg, Sesame Place, Water Country USA, Adventure Island.

Inactive, standby and retired reserve members, military retirees, U.S. Merchant Marine and civilian Department of Defense workers are ineligible for the program.

<http://www.herosalute.com>

### **The Silver Star Families of America**

Our organization, The Silver Star Families of America, was founded to recognize, remember and assist our wounded armed forces from all wars. We honor and remember our wounded primarily by the presentation of Silver Star Banners, certificates and letters to our Wounded or their families. The tradition of the Silver Star for the Wounded dates back to 1917 when people used to sew over a Blue Star with Silver thread to signify a Wounded Soldier. It is our wish that every time someone sees a Silver Star Banner in a window now or a Silver Star Flag flying that they remember the blood shed for this great Nation. You can see more about SSFOA at [www.silverstarfamilies.org](http://www.silverstarfamilies.org)

SSFOA representatives met with the American Legion's National Commander assistant while in DC and their support for SSFOA is favorable, and we are gaining support from our local posts as well. The organization is nationwide with State Coordinators in several States already. Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels recently signed a Proclamation for Indiana proclaiming May 1st as Silver Star Day for our wounded. We hope to see this Proclamation in every state soon.

<http://www.silverstarfamilies.org>

### **Blue Star Mothers**

Blue Star Mothers is for moms & step moms whose sons & daughters are serving in the armed forces or have been honorably discharged. Other family members can apply for

associate membership. Members display a Blue Star banners at their homes to signify a loved ones military deployment.

Active Minnesota Chapters are in Bird Island, Willmar, Alexandra, Moose Lake, Brainerd, Sauk Centre, and Morris. Chapters are forming in Faribault, Owatonna. And the Twin Cities. For details contact Carol Nelson

@ 218-825-9603 or go to

<http://www.bluestarmothers.org/mn.php>

### **Blue Star Banner**



The "Blue Star" Banner shown here is available through local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Posts or from Department Headquarters. The banner is printed on poster board (card stock 8-1/2" x 11") and is suitable for placement in windows.

Our VFW Posts in Minnesota have been asked to make these available to Family Members of Active Duty Service Members at **NO** cost. Additionally, the VFW would like to know the Service Members name and where they are serving.

The VFW also sponsors an Adopt-a-Unit Program. You can learn more about this program by logging onto our VFW National Web Page at:

<http://www.vfw.org>

## **Gold Star Mothers**



Natural mothers, adoptive mothers or stepmothers, who are citizens or legal residents of the United States or of the territorial and insular possessions of the United States, at the time of their sons or daughters induction into the United States Armed Forces and died as a casualty, killed, captured, missing in action, or as a result of illness or injury received through engagement in the Armed Forces in W.W. I, W.W. II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and other strategic areas, are eligible for membership in American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

If you meet the membership requirements, we would be happy to have you join us. Just request our [membership packet](#).

First year membership dues are \$15. Subsequent yearly dues are \$12. You will also need a copy of DD Form 1300, Report of Casualty, to submit with your application.

If you care to be part of the AGSM organization please request the membership packet through the link above or contact us at our headquarters listed on the home page.

<http://www.goldstarmoms.com/agsm/Home/index.htm>

## **Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.**

Provides support services to men and women whose spouses died in the line of duty or from a service disability. Areas of help include legislative information services; volunteer opportunities in community, military, and VA hospitals; and online chat group for new widows as well as a message board. Annual membership fee \$25.-. Members join local chapters and receive a quarterly newsletter.

P.O. Box 361986

Birmingham, AL 35236

1-888-751-6350

or

Washington Liaison Office

200 N Glebe Rd Room 425

Arlington, VA 22203-3755

1-703-351-6246

Resources for surviving spouses

<http://www.goldstarwives.org>

### **American Red Cross**

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

Emergency Communications Services

American Red Cross communication services keep military personnel in touch with their families following the death or serious illness of a family member or other important events, such as the birth of a child. The Red Cross quickly sends these communications on behalf of the family to members of the U.S. Armed Forces serving anywhere in the world, including ships at sea, embassies and isolated military units. The information or verification in a message assists the service member's commanding officer with making a decision regarding emergency leave.

#### How to Contact the American Red Cross to Send an Emergency Message

- Active duty service members stationed in the United States and their immediate family members may call the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Service Centers for help 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The toll-free telephone number is available through base or installation operators and from local on-base Red Cross offices.
- Other family members who do not reside in the service members' household, members of the National Guard and Reserves, retirees and civilians may access Red Cross services through their local Red Cross chapter, which is listed in local telephone books (1-877-272-7337)
- <http://www.redcross.org/where/where.html>.
- Overseas personnel stationed on military installations should call base or installation operators or the on-base Red Cross offices.
- At overseas deployment sites, contact the American Red Cross deployed staff.

When calling the American Red Cross to send an emergency message to a family member, it is helpful to have the following information:

Service members:

- Full Name
- Rank/Rating
- Branch of Service
- Social Security Number
- Military Address
- Information about the deployed unit and the home base unit (for deployed service members only) <http://www.redcross.org/services/afes/>
-

### **Army Emergency Relief**

AER is a private nonprofit organization incorporated in 1942 by the Secretary of War and the Army Chief of Staff. AER's sole mission is to help soldiers and their dependents.

AER is the Army's own emergency financial assistance organization and is dedicated to "Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own". AER provides commanders a valuable asset in accomplishing their basic command responsibility for the morale and welfare of soldiers.

AER funds are made available to commanders having AER Sections to provide emergency financial assistance to soldiers - active & retired - and their dependents when there is a valid need.

AER funds made available to commanders are not limited and are constrained only by the requirement of valid need.

Major commanders and their installation/organization commanders through AER sections and other related organizations conduct the AER assistance program within the Army structure.

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

### **Resource Life Lines**

911 Emergency

<http://armyfamiliesonline.org> 1-800-833-6622

1-800-SUICIDE for the National Suicide Hotline

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org> 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

### **Tee Up For The Troops**

Tee it up for the Troops is a non-profit organization established by family and friends of a soldier serving in the US Army. It was created to help honor and recognize the needs of all veterans who have served this nation. In 2006, the event is to be held locally at Mendakota Country Club on 8 September 2006. The goal is to annually make the Friday closest to September 11<sup>th</sup> a national day of golf saluting all those that have answered the call to duty. A 10% donation over the cost of the green fees is requested from other participating golf courses. This program is supported by the Minnesota PGA and the Club Managers Association of America. Additional information, call 952-646-2490 or go to their web site.

<http://www.TeeItUpForTheTroops.com>

### **88<sup>th</sup> Regional Readiness Command (RRC) 1-800-the ARMY**

<http://www.usarc.army.mil/88thrc/>

### **United States Army Reserve Command (USARC)**

<http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/arweb>

<http://www.goarmy.com/reserve/nps/>

## **United States Army**

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

## **M - Minnesota National Guard**

<http://www.minesotationalguard.org>

## **Human Resources Command**

<http://www.hrc.army.mil>

## **Army Well-Being Information**

<http://www.armyfamiliesonline.org>

## **Post-Deployment Health Reassessment**

The Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) was implemented U.S. Army-wide in January 2006. A key component of Soldier medical readiness, the PDHRA provides Soldiers a global health assessment, with a focus on behavioral health, 90 to 180 days after redeployment. The PDHRA also demonstrates the U.S. Army's commitment to caring for the health and well-being of its Soldiers. Commanders at all levels must ensure that Soldiers under their command who meet the requirements for the PDHRA receive it.

Each assessment includes an interview with a health care provider. During the assessment, Soldiers will have an opportunity to identify any new physical or behavioral health concerns they may be experiencing that may not have been present immediately after their redeployment. This new program has been very effective in identifying Soldiers who are experiencing some of the symptoms of stress-related disorders and getting them the care they need before their symptoms manifest into more serious problems.

All Soldiers who have redeployed from a combat zone since 10 March 2005 must complete the PDHRA. Additionally, Soldiers who redeployed between 11 September 2001 and 9 March 2005 are eligible to complete the screening but are not required to do so. Completion of the PDHRA consists of filling out the demographic information on the automated PDHRA form, the DD Form 2900, and conducting the one-on-one interview with a health care provider. Each Soldier's responses on the form are voluntary and confidential.

For more information on the PDHRA, visit the "**PDHRA for Commanders**" page in [AKO](#) (login required) or [click here](#).

**US Department of Defense Health Care Benefits System (TRICARE)**

**1-800-444-5445**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>

## **TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS)**

TRICARE Reserve Select is a quality Health Care for you and your family. TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is premium-based health plan that qualified National Guard and Reserve members may purchase TRS coverage.

Benefits of purchasing TRS:

- >Comprehensive health care similar to TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra.
- >Two types of coverage available: TRS members-only and TRS members-and-family.
- >Freedom to access covered services from any TRICARE-authorized provider or hospital.
- >Access to military treatment facility (MFT) care on a space-available basis.

### Qualifying for and purchasing TRICARE Reserve Select

National Guard and Reserve members may qualify to purchase TRS coverage if they are:

- >A member of the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve **not** on active duty.
- >Not eligible for or enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program

**Note:** If you are eligible for or enrolled in FEHB program, you are not eligible for TRS.

Contact your employer's personnel office for coverage under FEHB program.

#### Step 1: Qualify

- >Log on to the Guard and Reserve Web Portal at [www.dmdc.osd.mil/apply/trs/index.jsp](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/apply/trs/index.jsp)

#### Step 2: Purchase

If you qualify, you may purchase TRS coverage to begin in any month throughout the year. Coverage begins on the first day of the first or second month (whichever you select on the TRS Request Form) depending on the postmark date of your TRS Request Form.

\$81.00 for member-only

\$253.00 for member-and-family

If you lose coverage under a non-premium TRICARE health plan and qualify for TRS, you may purchase TRS with no break in coverage. Submit your completed TRS Request Form with enclosed premium postmarked no later than 60 days after loss of the non-premium TRICARE coverage. TRS coverage begins on the day after the loss of your other TRICARE coverage.

Contact your National Guard or Reserve personnel office for assistance.

For more information about TRS visit [www.tricare.mil/reserve/ReserveSelect](http://www.tricare.mil/reserve/ReserveSelect).

Or call 1-888-TRIWEST or 1-888-874-9378 [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com)

## **TRICARE Dental Program (TDP)**

- >Dental plan you may purchase when you are not covered by active duty dental benefits.
- >When you are activated, family members already enrolled in the TDP pay reduced premiums and may enroll at that time
- >For more information about enrolling in the TDP, call United Concordia Companies, Inc. (United Concordia) at 1-800-866-8499 or visit [www.TRICAREdentalprograms.com](http://www.TRICAREdentalprograms.com)

## **TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Benefits 1-866-363-8779**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy>

**TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy Program 1-866-363-8667**

<http://www.express-scripts.com>

**TRICARE Information Service (Medical) 1-800-363-2273**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil>

**TRICARE informational link**

DoD created an informational link on the TRICARE website at <http://tricare.osd.mil/tricarecost.cfm>. to help educate beneficiaries regarding what TRICARE will cover for certain medical visits and procedures.

<http://tricare.osd.mil/tricarecost.cfm>

**West Region TRICARE 1-888-874-9378 (Minnesota is in the West Region)**

<http://www.triwest.com>

**United Concordia (Dental) 1-800-866-8499**

<http://www.ucci.com>

**Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) 1-800-538-9552**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers>

**DEERS Updates 1-800-538-9552**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deersaddress>

**Rapid Site Location**

Searches for nearest military ID card office by city, state, or zip code

<http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home>

**Social Security 1-800-772-1213**

<http://www.ssa.gov>

**My Pay**

Allows a soldier to manage their pay information, leave and earnings statements, W-2's and much more. Soldiers in combat zone for 30 days or more, a special feature under the Saving Deposit Program provides 10% interest on savings up to \$10,000 while in theater.

<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

**Army Outreach Programs**

<http://www4.army.mil/outreach/index2.html>

### **AKO (Army Knowledge on Line)**

Provides a link for soldiers and families to communicate through email/chat/forum/Family Readiness Groups. Free anti-virus software for home computers, news channels and 24x7 help desk.

<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/login/welcome.html>

### **ARMY NEWS**

The site features a revamped news section with regional and sectional focuses such as Europe/Africa, Asia/Pacific and Middle East, as well as Technology, Health, and Human Interest. These sections capitalize on the capabilities of the newly activated

**Soldiers Media Center.**

<http://www.Army.mil/news>

### **AAFES**

#### **“Help Our Troops Call Home “**

Anyone can access “Help Our Troops Call Home” program through the link located at aafes.com The Military Exchange 550 Prepaid Phone Card can be purchased for individual military family members, friends, or select charities. The Military Exchange 550 Prepaid Phone Cards is the best value when calling from OEF/OIF back to the United States. (21 cents per minute and no hidden charges or connection fees and minutes do not expire)

#### **AAFES & America Supports You Offer Free Music for Troops**

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service and America Supports You are delivering a special gift to troops this holiday season--a free compilation of songs produced exclusively for Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines. After examining all available delivery options, Songs from the "CD For The Troops" will be offered to active-duty military members and veterans with valid military IDs through <http://www.aafes.com> for free. Artists included on the CD include Billy Joel, the Goo Goo Dolls, Brooks & Dunn, Five for Fighting, and Sarah McLachlan.

<http://www.aafes.com/pa/news/07news/07-090.htm>

#### **Gifts from the Homefront**

Anyone can send “Gifts from the Homefront” gift certificates to individual military family members, friends, or select charities by logging on to aafes.com or by calling 1-877-770-4438. Bulk purchase may also be made.

<http://www.aafes.com>

#### **Army Career & Alumni Program**

The Army Career & Alumni program helps soldiers prepare for the future. To list job opportunities for soldiers retiring or leaving the Army contact

<http://www.acap.army.mil>

To list jobs opportunities for severely wounded or injured soldiers from the War on Terror contact

<http://www.ds3connection.army.mil>

### **CarePages and USO Supports Wounded Troops**

Operation: Show You Care is a special partnership between the USO and CarePages where wounded Service members can be honored and appreciated by Americans this holiday season. Wounded Service members or a member of their family posts their story on the CarePages.com “Yellow Ribbons for Wounded Troops” tribute page and then visitors post a yellow ribbon in their honor. CarePages are free, easy-to-use web pages that help family and friends communicate when a loved one is receiving care. Learn more at <http://www.revolutionhealth.com/pages/carepages--operation-show-you-care>

### **Medical Holdover (MHO) Ombudsman Program (1-866-908-2762)**

The Medical Holdover Ombudsman Program is to provide assistance to MHO Soldiers and their family members. The team is comprised of military retirees, under the supervision of Chief, Medical Readiness, with extensive background knowledge and experience in the US Army Medical Command, US Army Inspector General Agency, Physical Disability, Reserve Component issues and the Medical Holdover Program.

MHO Soldiers and family members who require assistance related to the three corner stones of the MHO Program: command and control (C2), administrative services, and medical care, can call the Ombudsman Team Toll Free at 1-866-908-2762 or email: [Asarmra-ombudman@hqda.army.mil](mailto:Asarmra-ombudman@hqda.army.mil).

The team provides 24/7 operations with Ombudsman action officers standing by to provide 24 hour assistance to the DA MHO Tiger Team, consisting of over a dozen agencies and organizations, which can assist in providing through and quick responses to MHO Soldiers issues.

### **Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline**

AW2 operates a Call Center that is available to address questions from severely-wounded or injured Soldiers and families and/or to link them with the appropriate AW2 specialist, at 1-800-237-1336.

What is it? The "Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline" can be reached from 0700-1900 EDT, Monday through Friday, at 1-800-984-8523. The call center is under the initial operational command of the US Army's Human Resources Command. As additional people are trained to receive calls and refer them to the proper organization or agency for resolution, the hotline hours of operation will expand to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What has the Army done? On Mar 19th, at the direction of the Acting

Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff, Army, the Army opened the phones on its newly created Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline.

The purpose of the call center is twofold: To offer wounded and injured Soldiers and family members a way to seek help to resolve medical issues and to provide an information channel of Soldier medical related issues directly to senior Army leadership so they can improve the way the Army serves the medical needs of our Soldiers and their families.

Many wounded and injured Soldiers who have supported the Global War on Terror, as well as their families, are enduring hardships in navigating through our medical care system. Our Army is committed to providing outstanding medical care for the men and women who have volunteered to serve this great nation. In certain cases the Soldiers' chain of command could have done a better job in helping to resolve medically related issues.

Leaders in our Soldiers' chain of command need to be aware that this call center exists, and that it has not been created to circumvent the chain of command. In this particularly challenging time, as our senior Army leadership looks to ways to improve our service to wounded and injured Soldiers and their families, this is another step in the direction of improvement.

The Army's intent is to ensure wounded and injured Soldiers and their families that they receive the best medical care possible. It is not to punish Soldiers who make a statement against their chain of command. The Army chain of command will ensure every Soldier is assisted in navigating the Military Health Care System.

**The National Military Family Association, NMFA  
Wounded Service Members and Their Families Now Eligible for a Free Week-long  
Retreat**

ALEXANDRIA, VA, April 9, 2007 - The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is now accepting applications for a free getaway vacation for wounded service members and their families. Working in partnership with The Blewitt Foundation, NMFA will select participants to embark on Destination R&R.

The Blewitt Foundation created Destination R&R to honor the sacrifice of wounded service members and their families and to provide them with the opportunity for family rejuvenation and fun. The first Destination R&R retreat will be held this summer, from August 5 to 9, at the Turf Valley Resort, near Baltimore, MD. It will focus on fun for all ages and enable sharing, connecting and healing for families.

This pilot event is The Blewitt Foundation's first initiative to support military families experiencing severe injury or illness of their service member. Destination R&R is a unique program that serves the family as a group, at no cost. All expenses will be paid for the selected participants, including travel.

This retreat is offered to service members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, as well as members of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who were wounded or experienced emotional trauma or illness related to their service in the Global War on Terror. Members of the National Guard and Reserve in either activated or drilling status are eligible, provided their injury was sustained while on active duty or training.

Apply now. Applications are only accepted online, and must be submitted by midnight May 4, 2007.

[www.nmfa.org/destinationRR](http://www.nmfa.org/destinationRR)

<http://www.nmfa.org/site/R?i=ru6z0aAp2jKT29W0uTsx7g>

### **NMFA**

The National Military Family Association is the only national organization whose sole focus is the military family and whose goal is to influence the development and implementation of policies that will improve the lives of the families of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For nearly 40 years, its staff and volunteers, comprised mostly of military family members, have built a reputation for being the leading experts on military family issues. Visit for more information.

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

<http://www.nmfa.org/site/R?i=OloMY-9NxKlEoVjdEGKKmw>

### **The Blewitt Foundation**

The Blewitt Foundation's primary mission is to provide special comfort, enjoyment and enrichment opportunities for U.S. military families-with a focus on children experiencing loss, serious injury or related anxiety or fear-through partnerships with unique recreational and educational programs.

The overriding policy of The Blewitt Foundation is that every military family member who participates in a Foundation activity will do so free of charge, with all expenses paid, including travel. Find our more at

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

<http://www.nmfa.org/site/R?i=soU9vFIHWjwoupzKLi6l2Q..>

### **Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)**

Provides resources and assistance for wounded military vets.

The Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) was founded on the principle that veterans are our nation's greatest citizens. The WWP seeks to assist those men and women of our armed forces who have been severely injured during the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations around the world. Many of the injuries are traumatic amputations, gunshot wounds, burns and blast injuries that will retire these brave warriors from military service. The Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) was founded on the principle that veterans are our nation's greatest citizens. The WWP seeks to assist those men and women of our armed forces who have been severely injured during the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations around the world. Many of the injuries are traumatic amputations, gunshot wounds, burns and blast injuries that will retire these brave warriors from military service.

AW2 operates a Call Center that is available to address questions from severely-wounded or injured Soldiers and families and/or to link them with the appropriate AW2 specialist, at 1-800-237-1336.

<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org>

### **PTSD/mTBI Chain Teaching Program** **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Mild** **Traumatic Brain Disorder:** 🌐

Links to Chain Teaching packages and videos for Soldiers and Families.

### **PTSD/mTBI Chain Teaching on AKO** 🌐 (AKO)

### **Army Begins Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,** **Traumatic Brain Injury Chain Teaching**

### **Traumatic Brain Injury Video Now Available on** **the Web**

### **Screening Increases for Mild Traumatic Brain Injury**

### **Frequently Asked Questions about PTSD/mTBI Chain Teaching Program:**

Find answers to questions about this program such as, "What is the PTSD/TBI chain teaching program; when and where will it be implemented; and how will it help Soldiers, leaders and military medical professionals? Where and how can Soldiers and their families access this training information?"

### **Injured Veteran Uses Own Experience to Inspire Others With Traumatic Brain Injuries**

<http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/chainteaching/index.html>

### **Military Severely Injured Support 1-888-774-1361 -- Call anytime!**

**Overseas Toll-free:** Dial 0-800-888-0013; Press "05" to make a toll-free call to the USA; Enter 1-888-774-1361 to be connected.



Photo by U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School.

The **Military Severely Injured Center** was officially opened on February 1, 2005. The new center ties together military and other government programs, such as the Army Disabled Soldier Support System and similar programs in the other services, and those run by the departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs.

**Mission:**

To prepare severely injured Service members to return to duty or to reintegrate successfully into their hometowns.

**Objectives:**

To ensure that all severely injured Service members and their families receive the necessary support. A grateful nation will honor our heroes' service and stand with them.

To provide personalized assistance, tailored to meet an individual's unique needs during recovery and rehabilitation, in include:

- Medical care & rehabilitation
- Education, training and job placement
- Personal mobility and functioning
- Home, transportation and workplace accommodations
- Personal, couple and family issues counseling
- Financial resources

**Services:**

- Available 24/7, worldwide at no cost to severely injured Service members and their families

Regional ombudsmen/advocates to interface with and support severely injured Service members and their families

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

**Soldiers' Angels Foundation**

Soldiers' Angels is a 501 c 3 non-profit so all donations would be tax deductible.

We not only adopt service members, but we provide transitional backpacks to the wounded and laptops as well for those that are in the hospital for extended time frames and need access and do not have it.

Soldiers' Angels currently supports thousands of American Service Members stationed wherever we raise our Country's Flag and the number is growing daily. We also work tirelessly supporting our Wounded Soldiers, with backpacks filled with needed items , personal visits, phone calls, etc. Additionally, we send our thanks via letters and email to the military of Great Britain, Poland and Australia who serve by our soldiers side in Iraq.

Soldiers' Angels are dedicated to ensuring that our military know they are loved and supported during and after their deployment into harms way.

A community of Angels has developed projects to provide aid and comfort to our military and their families. Join the many Soldiers' Angels to ensure that no soldier goes unloved. If you would like to assist in adopting a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine, please Click here or to help our one of our Soldiers' Angels Operations come to fruition click here.

Shelle Michaels, APR  
Soldiers' Angels  
National Public Relations Director  
Tri-State Regional Manager  
2901 University Ave. STOP 7026  
Grand Forks, ND 58202  
(218) 779-7271

[shellemichaels@msn.com](mailto:shellemichaels@msn.com)

<http://www.soldiersangels.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>

National Communication Officer

Soldiers' Angels - [www.soldiersangels.org](http://www.soldiersangels.org)

## **American War Heroes**

American War Heroes is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization EIN 20-4919355 dedicated to improving and enhancing the quality of life for our injured War Heroes by providing them with emotional, financial and career support from our grateful USA citizens.

<http://www.americanwarheros.org>

## **Hope For The Warriors™**

The **mission** of Hope for the Warriors™ is to enhance quality of life for US Service Members and their families nationwide who have been adversely affected by injuries or death in the line of duty. Hope for the Warriors™ actively seeks to ensure that the sacrifices of wounded and fallen warriors and their families are never forgotten nor their needs unmet, particularly with regard to the short and long-term care of the severely injured.

To accomplish our mission, we have designed special projects and programs that allow and encourage community involvement. On their own, our service members and their families are awe inspiring in the face of their disabilities and hardships – courageous and resolute. But, it is with the support of a grateful nation that they remain unfaltering in their determination and find hope and purpose beyond recovery. As a united support network, all individuals, whether of great or small means, can find an opportunity to honor those who have willingly sacrificed to defend and protect our freedom. We invite you to take part in the inspirational lives of these young men and women and make it known that they never stand alone.

Hope for the Warriors™ is a civilian organization with 501(c) (3) non-profit status, is not a government agency and is solely supported by the generosity of individual, corporations, and foundations in support and appreciation of those who have sacrificed in the name of freedom.



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

**Operation Second Chance, Inc.**

*Mission Statement*

To aid in the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded service men and women.

To assist in the modification of housing to accommodate disabled veterans.

To assist the families of wounded service men and women.

To facilitate the transition of wounded service men and women back into civilian society.

<http://www.operationsecondchance.org>

## **Wounded Warriors at Walter Reed**

Officials at Walter Reed Army Medical Center are seeking donations for wounded troops who are forced to leave behind personal belongings when medically evacuated from war zones.

Many of the troops "arrive with nothing," said officials from the hospital's Family Assistance Center. Because of the speed with which the most serious wounded are evacuated from Iraq or Afghanistan, their belongings are often left behind and don't catch up.

So the center is looking for everything from shoes, gloves and winter jackets to postage stamps, prepaid phone cards and razors.

The Family Assistance Center requests that no cash or used items be donated. Among some of the more specialized needs are weight lifting gloves (for use by wheelchair patients); trousers with snaps or zips along the legs; umbrellas; and prepaid gas or grocery cards.

The center also helps patients file claims for personal belongings that were left behind during a medical evacuation. Loss or damage to items can be reimbursed through the system.

Donations can be sent to:

Walter Reed Army Medical Center

Medical Family Assistance Center

Bldg. 2, 3rd Floor, Room 3E01

6900 Georgia Ave, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 2001

Information on the donation programs & the medical center @

<http://wramc.army.mil/Soldiers/MedFac1/index2.htm>

Quilts of Valor Foundation

The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover ALL combat wounded and injured servicemembers from the War on Terror whether physical or psychological wounds with wartime quilts called Quilts of Valor (QOVS).

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

## **Sew for Comfort**

Thank you for your interest in Sew Much Comfort. American military personnel are serving our country in a variety of dangerous situations and locations. As a result of discharging their duties, a number of them are seriously wounded or injured. Modern medical technology is having great success saving the lives of these heroes; however, medicine doesn't address some of their basic needs, such as clothing that will accommodate medical devices and situations - braces, fixators, casts, prosthetics and burns. Many of the wounded troops are left with a hospital gown as their only clothing option.

Sew Much Comfort; a **non-profit 501(c) 3 organization** is filling the "adaptive clothing" need for these special patients. Our mission is to design, create and deliver customized clothing for these brave troops. Adaptive clothing accommodates their medical devices and situations, provides ease of use, personal independence and minimizes the visual impact of their medical condition. The goal is provide each soldier with an individually designed and tailored wardrobe of adaptive clothing, in order to provide them comfort and maintain their dignity, thereby facilitating the healing process.

This project is dependent on the generosity and skill of countless Americans who wish to show their support to the wounded soldiers who have given so much of themselves in serving this country. Please help us give these heroes a tangible symbol of our support for them in all phases of their recovery from battlefield to home.

<http://sewmuchcomfort.org/>

## **“Heroes to Hometowns” 1-888-774-1361**

**Heroes to Hometowns** is designed to welcome home Service Members who, because of injuries sustained, can no longer serve in the military. In creating a positive transition home, Heroes to Hometowns inspires community growth and establishes a support network for Service Members and their families that allow them to ease into their hometown or new surroundings.

For information, please call the Military Severely Injured Center at 1-888-774-1361

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

## **Fisher House 1-800-294-8560**

The Fisher House provides a home away from home to enable families to be closer to a loved one at a most stressful time – during hospitalization for an illness, disease or injury. You can contact them at Fisher House Foundation, Inc., 1401 Rockville pike, suite 600, Rockville, MD 20852; 301-294-8560

**M - Dee Oliver, Director of Public Affairs, MVH-Minneapolis (612)728-3178**

[deoliver@mpls.mvh.state.mn.us](mailto:deoliver@mpls.mvh.state.mn.us)

<http://www.fisherhouse.org>

## **Tragedy Assistance Programs for Survivors (TAPS)**

<http://www.taps.org>

### **Army Families First Casualty Call Center (FFCCC) Homepage**

*Do you have benefits questions?*

*Do you need assistance connecting to support groups?*

*Do you have Death Gratuity and SGLI questions?*

*Do you have questions regarding your loved one's service?*

Losing a loved-one is one of the most stressful events of our lives. The Army recognizes this difficulty and has established a team of dedicated professionals, Army's Families First Casualty Call Center, to provide families with long-term assistance after the loss of a Soldier.

For beneficiary/death benefits information, please visit the FFCCC [Finance Liaison Office](#) page.

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### **What is FFCCC?**

The Army's Families First Casualty Call Center (FFCCC) is a one-stop resolution center established to assist surviving family members of deceased Army Soldiers with questions regarding benefits, outreach, advocacy, and support. Our mission is to provide long-term support and advocacy and offer comprehensive solutions to the families of fallen Soldiers by partnering with private and public organizations as well as various outreach groups.

### **What is our Mission?**

Provide long-term support by offering comprehensive resolutions to the families of fallen Soldiers through partnerships with private and public organizations as well as various outreach groups.

### **How can I reach the Army's Families First Casualty Coordinator?**

FFCCC Support Coordinators are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Toll-free phone:** 1-866-272-5841

**Email address:** [FFCCC@hoffman.army.mil](mailto:FFCCC@hoffman.army.mil)

**Web address:** [www.armyfamiliesfirst.army.mil](http://www.armyfamiliesfirst.army.mil)

**Fax:** 703-325-2074

### **Mailing Address:**

Army Human Resources Command  
ATTN: AHRC-PEC (FFCCC)

200 Stovall Street  
Alexandria, VA 22332

### **What services does ARMY FFCCC provide?**

Coordinators assist families with understanding and applying for Survivor Benefits, resolving any outstanding issues regarding Soldier Services, offering assistance with obtaining Reports and connecting families to Support Programs.

#### **SURVIVOR BENEFITS**

- Death Gratuity (DG) eligibility
- Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) eligibility
- Montgomery GI Bill
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP)
- Social Security
- Relocation, transportation, and travel

#### **SOLDIER SERVICES**

- Casualty and mortuary services
- Awards and citations
- Posthumous promotions
- Pay and allowances

#### **REPORTS**

- Criminal Investigations Division (CID)
- Line of Duty (LOD)
- Collateral Investigation (AR 15-6)
- Autopsy Report

#### **SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

- Tragedy assistance peer support programs
- Stress management
- Peer mentoring
- Bereavement counseling
- Emergency financial services
- Military legal assistance and referrals
- Health services

### **Who is eligible to use Families First services?**

Family members of deceased Soldiers are eligible to obtain assistance, support, and referral information. FFCCC will provide assistance to spouses, children and parents, as well as extended family members of fallen Soldiers

<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/cmaoc/cmaocpages/ffccc.htm>

### **My Soldier**

<http://www.mville.edu/mysoldier/index.html>

### **Letters from Home**

<http://www.lettersfromhomeprogram.org>

### **Operation Gratitude**

<http://www.opgratitude.com/website2>

### **Operation Tribute to Freedom**

<http://www4.army.mil/otf/indexflash.php>

### **Freedom Team Salute**

<http://www.secureweb.hqda.pentagon.mil/ftspublic/>

### **Military Student**

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

## **Veterans Administration**

<http://www.va.gov>

### **Apply for Health Benefits (Health Benefits Advisor 1-800-827-1000)**

**Our soldiers who have served in the War on Terrorism have an entitlement to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs Healthcare System.** A systemic problem has developed with the soldiers who have returned from deployment. Demobilization sites are offering enrollment in the VA health care program from illness/injury sustained in theater on a volunteer basis. On the Application for Health Benefits, block 14, VA Form 10-10EZ, it asks YES “Do you want to an appointment with a VA doctor or provider as soon as one becomes available?” or NO “I am only enrolling in case I need care in the future.” Not everyone is signing up for this healthcare benefit. The program offers dental care benefits for the first 90 days after re-deployment and general healthcare benefits **for 5 years after re-deployment**. If the soldier does not apply for VA Health care benefits, it increases the timeline to receive access to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs Healthcare System.

<https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>

**M Q. I am being called to active duty and have questions about my employer provided pension and health benefits. Where can I get more information about my benefits?**

A. The Department of Labor's Veteran's Employment and Training Service (VETS) has information for veterans, National Guard or reservists who may be activated for military service. National Guard and reserve member called to active duty, and their civilian employers, have certain rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). VETS has developed a fact sheet and an interactive computer program, the USERRA Advisor, which address the rights and responsibilities of individuals and their employers under the law. These tools, and other USERRA information, can be found on the VETS Web site.

<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>

**M Q. I am a homeless veteran. What assistance is available?**

A. Both the federal VA and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) offer help.

For assistance through the VA call the VA Medical Center at

Minneapolis: One Veteran Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417

Phone number 612-725-2000 or 1-866-414-5058

fax 612-725-2049

St Cloud: 4801 Veterans Drive St. Cloud, MN 56303

Phone: (320) 252-1670 or (800) 247-1739

Fax: (320) 255-6494

When requesting assistance through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) you should call the Veterans Assistance Program. The Veterans Assistance Program (VAP) helps homeless veterans and those at-risk of becoming homeless receive the job training, education, counseling and rehabilitative services (such as alcohol and drug abuse treatment) they need to obtain steady employment, affordable housing and the skills to sustain a productive lifestyle.

**M Q. How do I enroll in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System?**

A. There are eligibility requirements for enrollment in the VA Healthcare System. VA Form 1010-EZ is used when applying for healthcare benefits. There are treatment and medication copays required for certain veterans. When applying for enrollment in the VA Healthcare system you must submit a completed VA Form 1010-EZ and a photocopy of your DD 214 or separation document. It is helpful to provide the VA a copy of your private health insurance card.

In the Minnesota area, the VA hospital holding jurisdiction is the VA Medical Center located at Minneapolis

**M The following Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) come under this facility:**

Hibbing, MN

Hibbing Clinic

1101 East 37th Street Suite 220

Hibbing, MN 55746

Phone: 218-263-9698

Fax: 218-262-1915

St. James, MN

St. James Health Services and VA Clinic

1207 6th Avenue South

St. James, MN 56081

Phone: 866-682-4682

Fax: 507-375-8636

Chippewa Falls, WI

Chippewa Valley Clinic

2503 & 2505 County Highway I

Chippewa Falls, WI 74729

Phone: (715) 720-3780

Fax: (715) 720-3781

Maplewood, MN

Maplewood Clinic

2785 White Bear Avenue  
Maplewood, MN 55109  
Phone: (651) 290-3040  
Fax: (651) 290-3037

Rochester, MN

Rochester Clinic  
1617 Skyline Drive  
Rochester, MN 55902  
Phone: (507) 252-0885  
Fax: (507) 529-8452

Superior, WI

Twin Ports Clinic  
3520 Tower Avenue  
Superior, WI 54880  
Phone: (715) 392-9711  
Fax: (715) 398-2923

**M Under the St Cloud VA, the following Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) come under this facility:**

Brainerd, Minnesota

Brainerd VA Clinic  
11800 State Hwy. 18  
Brainerd, MN 56401  
Phone: (218) 855-1115  
FAX (218) 855-1183

Montevideo, Minnesota

Montevideo VA Clinic  
1025 North 13th Street  
Montevideo, MN 56265

Phone: (320) 269-2222

FAX: (320) 269-8929

Vet Centers Minnesota

0429 Duluth Vet Center

405 E. Superior Street Duluth, MN (218)-722-55802 8654

0416 St. Paul Veterans Resource Center

2480 University Avenue St. Paul, MN 55114 (651)-644-4022

<http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>

[http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/rpt\\_fac\\_list.cfm](http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/rpt_fac_list.cfm)

To obtain further information regarding VA healthcare eligibility VA medical Center with your DD 214 and apply for enrollment at the admissions area.

**Apply compensation, Pension, or Vocational Rehabilitation benefits on line:**

<http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov>

**Facilities Locator**

<http://www.va.gov/sta/guide/home.asp>

**Education (GI Bill)**

<http://www.gibill.va.gov>

**Loan Guaranty**

<http://www.homeloan.va.gov>

**Veterans Service Organizations**

<http://www.va.gov/vso/default.asp>

**State Veterans Affairs Offices**

<http://www.va.gov/patners/stateoffice/index.htm>

**The Center for Women Veterans**

<http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>

**Information on re-employment rights and unemployment insurance**

<http://www.dol.gov>

**Burial and Memorial Benefits (1-800-827-1000)**

<http://www.cem.va.gov/burial.htm>

**VA Life Insurance 1-800-669-8477**

<http://www.insurance.va.gov/>

**Veterans Centers of the VA (Mental Health)**

[http://www.va.gov.res](http://www.va.gov/res)

**Veteran Military Service Awards**

VA is offering information about the campaign on its Web page, where veterans also can obtain information on the correct order of precedence for each military service's award, about how to replace mislaid medals, and learn how to confirm the decorations to which they are entitled.

<http://www.va.gov/veteranspride/>

**PTSD and Combat Veterans**

Studies of PTSD patients in general have suggested as many as half may enjoy complete remission and the majority of the remainder will improve. Research has led to scientifically developed treatment guidelines covering a variety of modern therapies with which clinicians have had success. Treatments range from psychological first aid to cognitive behavioral therapy. Psychopharmacology may include drugs such as Zoloft or Paxil -- with newer drugs under studies now in progress. More information about VA's PTSD programs is available at

<http://www.va.gov/opa/fact/docs/ptsd.doc>

<http://www.ncptsd.va.gov>.

**Become a VA Volunteer**

VA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system, with 153 hospitals, more than 130 nursing homes and 45 domiciliaries. The VA's volunteer service has more than 86,000 active volunteers who contributed nearly 12 million hours of service last year - the equivalent of 5,574 fulltime employees.

Anyone interested in becoming a VA volunteer or assisting in other ways should contact the nearest VA medical center. Potential volunteers can also call VA's toll-free number at 1-800-827-1000 or visit the Web site and clicking "Volunteer Now."

<https://www.va.gov/volunteer>

**Additional Resources****Combat Veterans Information**

<http://www.va.gov/Environagents/page.cfm?pg=16>

**Transition Assistance Program**

<http://www.va.gov/opa/fact/transst.asp>

**Survivors Benefits**

<http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors/index.htm>

## **Women Veterans Information**

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Topics/Women/>

## **Service Organizations**

**M - Department of Veterans Affairs Minnesota (651-296-2562)**

<http://www.mdva.mn.us>

**M - Military Order of the Purple Heart (612-970-5667)**

An Organization Chartered by Congress and Recognized by VA for Claim Representation.

In Minnesota they are located in the 208 Veterans Building, St Paul, MN 55155  
Office 651-565-3864

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

Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA (A Membership Organization)

All persons of good moral character who are awarded the Purple Heart Medal by the Government of the United States AND are not dishonorably discharged are eligible for active membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A.

Simply complete and submit an application form, provide documentation to us of the award of the Purple Heart Medal, and remit your dues to our office.

<http://www.purpleheart.org/Membership/Public/BecomeAMember/Eligibility.aspx>

Are you a lineal relative of a Purple Heart Medal Recipient? If so, you qualify for Associate Membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart Work side by side with Purple Heart recipients to continue the legacy of these brave men and women who gave so much to this country.

To be eligible for Associate Membership, you must be a parent or lineal descendant of either a living or deceased Purple Heart recipient. *(Please note that siblings are not eligible.)*

**M - American Legion (651-291-1800)**

<http://www.mnlegion.org>

### **American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund**

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund was established to help provide children who have lost a parent on active duty since September 11, 2001 with financial assistance towards a college education. The award is funded entirely with donations. To learn more about the award, and to make a donation to support the Legion's efforts on behalf of military families, please visit

[http://www.legion.org/support/?content=gi\\_amlegacysch#legacy](http://www.legion.org/support/?content=gi_amlegacysch#legacy)

**M - Veterans of Foreign Wars (651-291-1757)**

<http://www.vfw.state.mn.us/>

**UNMETNEEDS Our Military Families need your help**

Veterans of Foreign Wars.

With the help of corporate sponsors like Vermont American, the VFW Foundation receives funding to establish, administer and promote the Unmet Needs Program. But these corporate gifts will fall short of military families' critical needs, and the program will be mostly funded by individual donations from people like you.

Funds from donations are available to the five branches of service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard), as well as members of the Reserves and National Guard. Funds awarded by the program are offered in the form of grants, not loans, so recipients don't need to repay them. As they are typically less than \$1500, there is little chance that they will affect the recipient's taxes.

Vermont American has committed \$1.25 million over the next five years, along with advertising and promotional support of the program. That money covers administrative costs, so 100% of public donations received over the website or through the mail (see address information or brochures for details) goes directly to our military families in need.

A portion of every purchase of Vermont American Power Tool Accessories (drill bits, saw blades, etc.) also goes to support the Unmet Needs Programour donations

Make a donation

Donate your skills & time

Receive assistance for your military family

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

**M - Disabled American Veterans (651-291-1212)**

<http://www.davmn.org>

**M - Marine Corp League (952-445-0530)**

<http://www.mcleague.com>

**AMVETS (701-451-4642)**

<http://www.amvets.org>

**M - Disabled American Veterans (651-291-1212)**

<http://www.davmn.org>

**M - Americans Ex-Prisoners of War (651-291-2436)**

<http://www.axpow.org>

**M - Vietnam Veterans of America (651-224-6345)**

State Veterans Service Bldg

20 West 12th St #121

St Paul, Minnesota 55155 USA

<http://www.vva.org>

**M - The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) Chapter 115**

Premier source of grassroots lobbying, legislative and health care information for active duty and retired enlisted personnel.

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

**M - Air Force Sergeants Association Chapter 858**

<http://afsa858.home.att.net/>

**Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) 1-800-234-MOAA (6622)**

Over 360,000 - members provides benefit information, educational assistance, TOPS The Officer Placement Service, insurance services, health services, financial services, travel assistance, and MOAA Wireless.

<http://www.moaa.org>

**Reserve Officers Association of the United States (ROA)**

Their purpose is to promote the development and execution of military policy for the United States that will provide adequate national security. ROA member services offer insurance, Visa credit cards, National car rentals, pharmacy service and discounts to the Army Times.

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

**Association of the United States Army (AUSA)**

Over 100,000 members, AUSA member benefits include health insurance, long term/eldercare AUSA bank card, Vision One Eyecare, Choice hotels, Army Times discounts, Wells Fargo educational loans, Hertz, Avis, National, Alamo, Budget rental car, Armed Forces Services Corp, and CD's and money market accounts. (703)-841-4300 or (800)-336-4570 for member services

<http://www.auasa.org>

### **M - General John W. Vessey AUSA Chapter**

To be the voice for the Army and carry the message into our communities, civic and social organizations, and our employers on how important a strong and responsive Army force is needed in today's ever changing and challenging world. They have also provided support for the wound veterans and their families at the Minneapolis VA.

<http://www.vessey5401.org>.

### **Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) (1-800-336-4590)**

Local ESGR leaders are available to assist you in ESGR-related matters that do not require intervention with an employer. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR EMPLOYMENT SITUATION, PLEASE CALL OUR TOLL FREE NUMBER, 1-800-336-4590. If you have other ESGR related matters, contact the appropriate local committee. Their phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses are provided for ESGR-related issues only. We request that companies do not use this information for solicitation purposes out of consideration for our volunteers.

<https://www.esgr.org>

### **M - United Veterans Legislative Council of Minnesota**

A consortium of Veterans, Military, and Auxiliary Organizations to exchange information and support issue relating to entitlements for Veterans, Military Retirees, the National Guard and Military Reservists, and their dependents and survivors.

Veterans Service Bldg, Room 200, 20 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, St Paul, MN 55155-2079

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

### **M -MACV**

Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is a statewide nonprofit serving veterans for over 13 years. It maintains offices in Minneapolis, Mankato, and Duluth. Its mission is to assist and support veterans and their families with services focused on housing, employment, and legal support. For assistance, a veteran can call Minneapolis (612-726-1327),

Mankato (507-345-8258), or Duluth (218-722-8763).

<http://www.mac-v.org>

### **M-Team USA Hockey**

Your company can support our local military personnel by entertaining them to the best professional hockey has to offer, the TEAM USA games of the 2004 World Cup of Hockey this September at Xcel Energy Center! Utilizing this event for a great cause, an economical sponsorship has been created including recognition elements, and tickets purchased being allocated to Minnesota military members. For more information, contact [Mike Kimbell](#), Minnesota Wild at 651.312.3481

### **Operation Hero Miles**

Operation Hero Miles provides a way to help our troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan by donating unused frequent flyer miles. Efforts are underway to make the donated miles more broadly available to all U.S. military personnel.

<http://www.heromiles.com>

### **Help Our Troops Call Home**

Military Exchange Prepaid Calling Cards: The Department of Defense Military Exchanges have been authorized to sell prepaid calling cards to individuals and organizations who wish to purchase these cards for our troops serving overseas in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. **1-800-527-2345**

<http://www.usmc-mccs.org/>

## **AnySoldier.US**

Send a care Package to any soldier in “harm’s way”

<http://www.anysoldier.us>

## **Defend America**

A Department of Defense site. Send an e-mail to those who are defending our country.

<http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html/>

## **Adopt a Platoon**

The AdoptaPlatoon Soldier Support Effort™ founded in 1998 is a nonprofit 501C-3 organization managed nationwide by volunteer mothers to ensure that deployed United States Service members in all branches of the military are not forgotten by providing needed mail support and to promote patriotism in our schools and communities. To provide a better deployment quality of life, lift morale, and assist military families, the AAP created projects that meet the need of military requests, established special projects for holidays, and assigns individual morale lifting mail support to service members of all branches of the U.S. military serving their Nation around the world.

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

*Donation to one of the military relief societies:*

## **Army Emergency Relief**

200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332

Phone: 703-428-0000

Toll Free: 866-878-6378

DSN: 328-0000

Fax: 703-325-7183

DSN: 221-7183

AER is the Army's own emergency financial assistance organization and is dedicated to "Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own". AER provides commanders a valuable asset in accomplishing their basic command responsibility for the morale and welfare of soldiers.

**What is it?** Army Emergency Relief (AER) is a private nonprofit organization incorporated in 1942 by the Secretary of War. AER's sole mission is to provide financial assistance to Soldiers and their Families.

In the form of interest-free loans and grants for:

- Emergency assistance to include rent, food, travel, car repair, funeral, medical and dental expenses.
- Children and Spouse Scholarships
- Incidental expenses for Soldiers medically evacuated from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom
- Support to Families of Fallen Soldiers

AER assistance is available 24/7 and worldwide. The Army operates 91 AER offices at U.S. Army Installations where Soldiers and their Families may seek AER assistance. To ensure access to AER assistance, Soldiers and their Families may also go to any of the other Military Aid Societies (Air Force Aid Society, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance) or the American Red Cross.

**What has the Army done?** To increase Soldiers' awareness of AER and to help raise funds to support AER's mission, the Army conducts an annual AER Campaign from March 1st through May 15th. In addition to its Annual Campaign, AER accepts unsolicited donations from individual donors and corporations at anytime.

**Why is it important to the Army?** The well-being of the Army's AII-Volunteer Force depends on the well-being of our Soldiers and Families. Army Emergency Relief is dedicated to "Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own" and provides Army Leaders a valuable asset in accomplishing their command responsibility and moral obligation as leaders to ensure a ready source for financial assistance to

Soldiers and their Families.

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

### **Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society**

The mission of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is to provide, in partnership with the Navy and Marine Corps, financial, educational, and other assistance to members of the Naval Services of the United States, eligible family members, and survivors when in need; and to receive and manage funds to administer these programs.

<http://www.nmcrcs.org/index.html>

### **Air Force Aid Society**

The AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY (AFAS) is the official charity of the U.S. Air Force. It promotes the Air Force mission by helping "to relieve distress of Air Force members and their families and assisting them to finance their education. <http://www.afas.org/index.htm>

### **M - Veteran Transition Center/Comfort for Courage**

The Veterans Transition Center is Comfort for Courage's latest achievement and was recently established on the University of Minnesota campus to help Veterans smoothly make the transition from military to civilian life.

The VTC is located in Room 15 of Eddy Hall and provides Veterans with a one-stop-shop for resources to help them with a variety of needs, such as GI Bill benefits and physical and psychological needs.

In addition, the VTC aims to offer Veterans a place where they can meet and start forming bonds with other student Veterans that can relate to them

On University of Minnesota assists veterans transitioning from the military to college Comfort for Courage is a student-led movement at the University of Minnesota, which recognizes the role U.S. service members hold in the defense of our nation and the protection of our shared freedoms.

We collect, manage and distribute resources for the sole purpose of providing comfort for deployed service members and their families.

Comfort for Courage is a non partisan organization that brings people together through our shared respect for and desires to help our nation's heroes, many of whom are our friends and classmates.

Veterans Transition Center  
15 Eddy Hall  
192 Pillsbury Drive SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
<http://www.comfortforcourage.org/>

### **Army Spouse Employment Partnership (The website for Army Families)**

**What is it?** The Army Spouse Employment Partnership (ASEP) is a self-sustaining and expanding partnership that is mutually beneficial to the Army and corporate America. The partnership provides Army spouses the opportunity to attain financial security and achieve employment goals through career mobility and enhanced employment options. Corporate partners are provided the capability to tap into a readily available, diverse and talented pool of candidates.

**What has the Army done?** In October 2003, the Army formally signed a Statement of Support with 13 Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies and two military agencies who pledged their best efforts to increase employment and career opportunities to spouses. The Army has been conducting ongoing quarterly meetings chaired by Mr. John P. McLaurin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Human Resources, since the program inception. Currently, there are 21 ASEP partners from the private sector and the military. Current partner companies include:

Adecco;  
United States Army;  
Army Career and Alumni Program;  
Army and Air Force Exchange Service;  
BellSouth;  
Boys and Girls Clubs of America;  
Computer Sciences Corporation;  
Concentra Incorporated;  
CVS/pharmacy;  
Defense Commissary Agency;  
Dell Incorporated;  
Department of the Army Civilian Personnel Office;  
EURPAC Service Incorporated;  
Home Depot;

Hospital Corporation of America;  
Lockheed Martin;  
Manpower Incorporated;  
Sabre Holdings/Travelocity;  
Sears Holdings Corporation;  
Sprint;  
Sun Trust Bank; and  
United Services Automobile Association.

In July 2005, the military spouse job search website, hosted by ASEP, was launched. This site is an association page with the Department of Labor's America's Job Bank that provides military spouses a portal for their resumes and allows ASEP partners the opportunity to post jobs on the site.

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

### **Welcome to MilSpouse.org**

MilSpouse.org is your resource library for military spouse [employment](#), [education](#) and [relocation](#) information. Here you will find thousands of links to employment related information and other resources for military spouses and military families.

<http://milspouse.org>

### **CinCHouse – The nonprofit community of military wives and women**

Volunteer organization of military wives, created to help military wives and women in the military manage day-to-day life.

<http://www.cinchouse.com>

### **The Military Family Network**

<http://www.emilitary.org>

### **Army Family Team Building/Army Family Plan Program (AFTB/AFAP)**

<http://www.goacs.org>

### **M - Army Reserve Family Programs Office (612-713-3324)**

ARFP is committed to offering education, training, awareness, outreach, information, referral, and follow-up. Our mission and vision statements reflect our commitment to the Army Reserve community.

<http://www.arfp.org>

### **M - Minnesota National Guard Family Programs (1-888-234-1274 or 651-268-8200)**

Provides links to organizations and businesses that are providing support to our National Guard members and their families.

<http://www.dma.state.mn.us/familyprograms/index.htm>

**Operation Smart Web** (Information on joining the US Army Reserve)

Contact a recruiter at 1-800-usa-army, ext 181

<http://www.goarmyreserves.com>

**Army Reserve Ambassador web page**

The web page provides biographical information and how to contact your Army Reserve Ambassador

<http://www.ambassador@usar.army.mil>

**“Kids Thank A Veteran”**

My name is Cherie Reid and I am a teacher in Howell, New Jersey. I have created a website called “Kids Thank A Veteran” at [www.kidsthankavet.com](http://www.kidsthankavet.com). I hope that this website will eventually spread across the United States to children of all nationalities, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels. It has one primary purpose – to have children thank a Veteran for serving. Every child that thanks a Veteran will be able to go to the site, and register its first name and state so that I can keep a National tally. I truly feel that many of our children do not appreciate our American Veterans and the important part they have played in securing our American Freedoms. This simple gesture of saying "Thank you for serving" will cause them to become aware of our Veterans, and hopefully, these students will continue this practice throughout their lives. The secondary purpose is education. I have researched information on a variety of topics, which include:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | What is a Veteran?                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Information on Veteran holidays and military awards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Our American flag (also POW/MIA flag)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Military services and academies                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Groups that help Veterans                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Women in the military                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Those who have sacrificed                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Memorials/cemeteries                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Teacher activities (including songs, puzzles, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Patriotic crafts                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Children's book suggestions                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Veteran photo page                                  |

This site is strictly for educational purposes and will be closely monitored so that it will be a safe site for children to visit. Veteran’s pictures that are submitted for the photo page, will come to me first so that inappropriate pictures will not be posted. All comments that are submitted will also be monitored.

The next step I will be taking is to let people know that this tribute website exists. This will be a massive undertaking, which will include publicity, handouts, letters to every state educational system, etc. I am determined to continue this project and to make

it a success, and would appreciate any help you could give me. Any donations to “Kids Thank A Veteran” would go directly to website expenses. I have included a navigation button on my site to give recognition to any groups that help with this project. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call at 732-349-6394 and please visit “Kids Thank A Veteran”.

Cherie Reid, Director

338 Ashford Road, Toms River, NJ 08755

<http://www.kidsthankavet.com>

### **Hero Bracelets**

Our aim is to raise money to help build a world-class advanced training skill facility at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The center will serve military personnel catastrophically disabled in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as military personnel and veterans severely injured in the normal performance of duties. \$2 from each HeroBracelet or tag sold is donated to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund for this purpose.

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

### **MGIB Transferability**

The Army announced on July 21, 2006 the implementation of a pilot program allowing Soldiers in critical skills that reenlist the ability to transfer up to 18 months of their Montgomery GI Bill benefits to their spouse.

The requirements are - enlisted Soldiers who:

- \*Have completed at least six years of service
- \*Reenlist for a minimum of four years
- \*Qualify for a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) specific Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB)
- \*Are entitled to a Zone B or Zone C bonus

Soldiers can choose between a full SRB or a slightly reduced SRB plus the ability to transfer more than \$18,000 in benefits.

The Army will study the results of the program with the possibility of making it a permanent part of the Army's reenlistment policies.

"The Army continues to focus on and provide support to Soldiers' families because it is the right thing to do, and because we know that we recruit Soldiers, but retain families," said Maj. Gen. Sean Byrne, director of Army Military Personnel Management.

Soldiers interested in participating in the program should visit their servicing Career Counselor for information.

Check out the following:

**MILPER Message # 06-205**

**MGIB Transferability Brochure**

**MGIB Transferability Questions & Answers**

<http://www.education.military.com/money-for-school/gi-bill/additional-gi-bill-features>

### **Program for Soldiers/Retirees to Earn \$2,000 Referral Bonus Expanded**

The latest recruiting incentive that will pay Soldiers a **\$2,000** lump sum payment for referring applicants who enlist, complete basic training, and graduate advanced individual training has been expanded. Effective 1 June 2006, Army Retirees are eligible to provide referrals under this program and receive the \$1K bonus by referring persons that have not previously conducted an appointment with a recruiter.

The Secretary of the Army may pay a bonus to any Soldier or retiree who refers to an Army recruiter a person who has not previously served in the Armed Forces and enlists in the Active Army, Army National Guard or the Army Reserve. The referral may not be an immediate family member and the referring Soldier or retiree may not be serving in a recruiting or retention assignment.

The referral must be made by the Soldier/retiree prior to the new recruit's first meeting with a recruiter to be eligible to receive the bonus.

<http://www.usarec.army.mil/>

<http://www.1800goguard.com/esar>

### **Postal Service Makes It Easier and Cheaper to Send Care Packages**

Effective March 3, 2008, the U.S. Postal Service will offer a new, larger Priority Mail Flat-Rate Box enabling customers to ship 50 percent more than with the current box. It will be offered at a discount to overseas military addresses. There will be a special version of the box for the military, with a \$2 discount, if shipped to an Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office (APO/FPO) address. The USPS website has valuable tips for sending mail to troops stationed overseas:

<http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/>

### **Military Care Packet Kit** (from the United States Postal Service)

Since Priority Mail supplies are the packing of choice for families preparing care packages for service members overseas, the USPS has created a **“Military-Kit”** based on the items most frequently requested by the military.

The kit contains:

Three (3) each of flat rate boxes O-FRB1 & O-FRB2

(Shipping is **only \$8.10** regardless of actual weight of the piece.)

Two each of cube boxes OBOX4 & OBOX7

Address labels – Label #228 (10 each)  
One roll of Priority Mail tape  
15 customs forms with envelopes  
(Use PS Form 2976 for pieces weighing under 1 pound)  
(Use PS Form 2976-A for pieces weighing over 1 pound)

The kit may be requested by calling **1-800-610-8734 (Packing Supply)**:

1. Choose your language (1 is English, 2 is Spanish).
2. Choose option 1 (it states it is for Express Mail, Priority Mail or Global Express Guaranteed products).
3. When you reach a live agent, request **CAREKIT04**
4. Please allow 7-10 days for delivery.

**NOTE; THESE ARE FREE SUPPLIES, POSTAGE MUST BE AFFIXED TO ALL PACKAGES**

### **M - Veterans Airlift Command (952-582-2911)**

The VAC is a not-for-profit organization that connects pilots, plane owners and others who work together to make life a little easier for our veterans and their families by providing air transport and related ground transportation to and from medical centers. We're essentially a scheduling organization, funded entirely by donations from private individuals and corporations.

Our priority is on the veterans of Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan). As capacity allows, our mission will expand to veterans of other wars and their families. Donors, pilots and plane owners: Find out more and get involved.

**Social workers, veterans and families:** Call to learn about guidelines and obtain registration forms.

<http://www.veteransairlift.org>

### **America Supports You**

#### [How You Can Receive Help](#)

Many non-profit organizations want to help meet your needs. These groups send care packages, donate airline miles to help reunite returning military men and women with their families, support scholarship funds or send support to wounded service members. Using the links on this page you will find more than 150 non-profit organizations that have joined the America Supports You team and are dedicated to helping you and your families.

## How You Can Help

Thank you for joining millions of your fellow Americans in wanting to find ways to show support for our military. Whether you want to send a care package to a soldier, donate airline miles to help reunite returning military men and women with their families, support scholarship funds or send support to wounded service members, on this page you will find over 150 non-profit organizations dedicated to helping our troops and their families.

If you know of a non-profit organization in your community focused on helping our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Coast Guardsmen, Marines and National Guardsmen that is not currently listed, please [contact](#) America Supports You today to have them join the team.

### Computer Donation

### Other Support

### Donate Frequent Flyer Miles

### Phone Cards

### Entertainment for the Troops

### Scholarships for Military Children

### Event Sponsorship

### Send Care Packages

### Gift Certificates

### Service Aid Societies

### Help for the Wounded

### Training and Placement for Veterans

### Helping Troops Help Others

### Tragedy Assistance

### Homes for Disabled Troops

### Video Conferencing

### Letters and Messages

### Veteran Service Organizations

### Military Family Support

### Disclaimer

The appearance of hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the Defense Department of linked sites or the information, products or services contained therein. For other than authorized activities such as military exchanges and Morale, Welfare and Recreation sites, the Defense Department does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. Such links are provided consistent with the stated purpose of this DoD Web site.

<http://www.americasupportsyoud.com/americasupportsyoud/index.aspx>

## Lets Say Thanks

If you go to the web site you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it and it will be sent to a soldier that is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to some member of the armed services. It is FREE and it only takes a second. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the soldiers received a bunch of these? I sent mine, now you send one too!

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

## M - Veterans on the Lake Resort

Veterans on the Lake, is a not for profit organization will provide a barrier free setting for memorable outdoor recreation experience for disabled veterans, veterans, their families, friends and supporters. It is designed "with Veterans in Mind" while recognizing what they have contributed to and scarified for our nation.

Veterans on the Lake Resort, is situated on 25 acres of Superior National Forest land and 2,700 feet of shoreline. They have year around accessibility to the Tomahawk and Taconite Trails for snowmobiling and hiking enjoyment. They have dining facilities, gift and bait shop, sauna, and on site creation. Some cabins have wheelchair accessibility. Several cabins are available during the winter months.

Veterans on the Lake Resort

161 Fernberg Road

Ely, MN 55731-9346

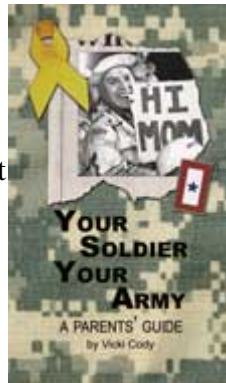
Phone 218-365-6900 Fax 218-365-3749 Toll free 1-800-777-7538

<http://veterans-on-the-lake.com>

## Your Soldier, Your Army: A Parents' Guide

*Your Soldier, Your Army: A Parents' Guide* was written by Vicki Cody, wife of GEN Richard Cody, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and the mother of two Apache helicopter pilots with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Mrs. Cody turns her own 30-year experience as the wife and mother of Soldiers into advice and consolation for other parents with deploying children. The book's tone is warm and confidential with an honest mix of pride and tribulation, a tone that appeals to concerned parents. Mrs. Cody covers the whole gamut of deployments, from the preparation through the endurance to the homecoming, and includes a personal view into Army life and an explanation of Army terminology. Supplemental articles and exclamation points feature tips and facts about the Army.

<http://www.ausa.org/webpub/DeptFamilyPrograms.nsf/byid/KCAT-6HCH3X>



“**Courage After Fire**” with forward by Senator Bob Dole

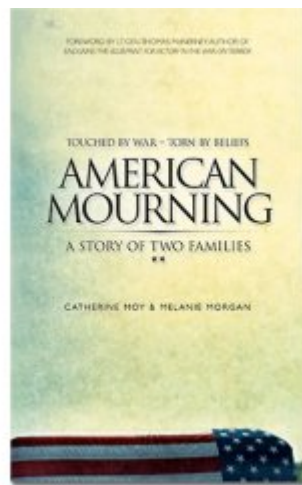
The book is recommended reading for soldiers and their families. “Courage After Fire” is a re-adjustment guide for military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families.

- Reconnecting with loved ones
- Combating war reactions
- Resources to help re-adjustment
- Returning to work and community

Available at book stores nation wide or online at <http://www.Amazon.com>  
Ulysses Press publisher  
**1-800-377-2542**  
<http://www.courageafterfire.com>

### **American Mourning:**

The Intimate Story of Two Families Joined by War, Torn by Beliefs (Hardcover) Authors  
Catherine Moy and Melanie Morgan

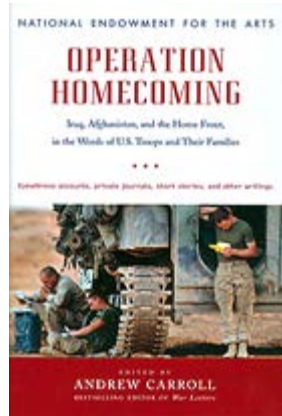


<http://www.amazon.com/American-Mourning-Intimate-Families-Beliefs/dp/1581825404>

### **“Operation Homecoming”**

The book features almost 100 writings--including journal entries, letters, short stories, and e-mails sent to friends and family from the front. The writings express the range of emotions of life during wartime -- the severity of combat, the heartache of loved ones on the home front, the tedium and humor in day-to-day life in a war zone, and tearful homecomings for those returning to the States.

"*Operation Homecoming* is important on three levels--the human, historic, and literary," said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. "In human terms, the program and the resulting anthology have helped our troops and their families express their thoughts about the experience of wartime. *Operation Homecoming* has historic importance in creating personal accounts of the war by individuals who would not normally be heard. In artistic terms, this book will help discover new literary talent."



<http://www.nea.gov/national/homecoming/booktourdates.html>

**M - Minnesota Military Absentee Voting (651-296-2803 or 1-877-600-8683)**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE RITCHIE PRAISES LAW THAT IMPROVES VOTING ACCESS FOR THOUSANDS OF MINNESOTANS SERVING OVERSEAS**

SAINT PAUL, Minn.-April 18, 2008-Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie praised the enactment of S.F. 1218, a bill related to Military and Overseas Voting, which makes voting easier for Minnesotans overseas by cutting in half the transit time of mailed absentee ballots. The new law allows blank ballots to be sent overseas to absentee voters via e-mail while still requiring the voter to print out the ballot and return it by U.S. mail. This fulfills the requirement that all votes cast in Minnesota are done on paper ballots while making the process faster and more convenient to voters.

"This legislation provides a significant boost to deployed service members," said Colonel Eric Ahlness, Minnesota National Guard. "It will ensure their personal information is protected and provide the structure to reduce the delivery time of ballots to service members. This change improves delivery time by 50% which helps make their vote count."

In the 2006 election, fewer than 3,000 overseas voters successfully cast ballots. One of the key problems overseas voters face is that Minnesota's primary is held in September, and general election ballots cannot be printed until primary results are known. Ballots are often received overseas too late to be returned stateside before the election.

"There are more than 70,000 Minnesotans serving our nation overseas and they deserve to participate in their democracy at home," Ritchie said. "This legislation removes barriers to voting overseas and moves Minnesota closer to ensuring that all citizens who are eligible to vote can cast their ballots."

Ritchie thanked Representative Jeremy Kalin, DFL-Chisago County and Senator Sharon Erickson Ropes, DFL-Winona for shepherding this legislation through the legislative process.

"The right to vote-and the assurance that vote will be counted-is the cornerstone of our democracy," said Rep. Kalin. "Fixing our overseas voting process was the right thing to do."

"I was very pleased to work across party lines with the governor's office, the Pentagon, Secretary of State Mark Ritchie and Rep. Jeremy Kalin to ensure that Minnesotans overseas get their votes counted," said Senator Erickson Ropes.

The Military and Overseas Voting bill is part of the Office of the Secretary of State's legislative package for the 2008 legislative session. The bill received support from the U.S. Department of Defense, the Minnesota South District of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, and the United Veterans Legislative Coalition.

"This was a great cooperative effort of all involved-governor, legislature, support groups, and the Office of the Secretary of State. This benefits all of Minnesota's military and overseas absentee voters," said Polli Brunelli, Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program, U.S. Department of Defense.

The electronic transmission of blank ballots is currently allowed in thirty-seven states and territories.

You can vote by absentee ballot if you are unable to vote in person on Election Day because you are:

- away from home
- ill or disabled
- an election judge serving in a precinct other than your own
- unable to go to the polling place due to a religious observance or belief.

Note: **The easiest way to vote by absentee ballot is to do so in person, at your county auditor or city or township clerk's office, starting 30 days prior to Election Day.** Contact your county auditor for details ([click here](#) for county contact info).

The application and instructions for absentee voters voting through the mail can be found here:

- [Absentee Ballot Application](#)
- [Instructions To Registered Absentee Voter](#)
- [Instructions To Non-Registered Absentee Voter](#)

To obtain an absentee ballot through the mail, complete the Absentee Ballot application and send it to your county auditor ([click here](#) for county contact info). Your ballot will be sent to you when it is ready (as early as 30 days before Election Day).

[Military Absentee Voting](#)

If you are a Minnesota resident visiting or living abroad, you may vote by absentee ballot. We want to make it as easy as possible for you to vote, even as you are away from home, and we will do everything we can to make sure your vote counts.

To apply for an absentee ballot you simply fill out the Federal Postcard Ballot Application and mail or fax it to your county auditor.

#### Federal Postcard Ballot Application

**Note: Your absentee ballot must be received in your precinct by Election Day when the polls close, or it will not be counted. So, apply and send in your ballot early.**

Note: If you permanently reside outside the United States you are eligible to vote for Federal offices, including President, US Rep and US Senate. If you are temporarily outside the US you are eligible to vote the entire ballot including local offices.

For more information, you may also call the Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program at 1-800-438-VOTE (8683), or our office at 1-877-600-VOTE. The DOD is the resource for all overseas US citizens.

<http://www.sos.state.mn.us>

#### **M - Cardinal Stritch University**

**Cardinal Stritch University offer 25% discount to Vets and Active duty troops.** As a leader in adult education, Cardinal Stritch University is proud to be one of the first to offer business degree programs exclusively for working adults. Stritch's College of Business offers career-focused certificate programs and undergraduate and graduate business degree programs. To conveniently meet the needs of adult learners, the College has expanded to three regional campuses and 19 classroom locations throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Cardinal Stritch University  
3300 Edinborough Way Suite 320  
Edina, MN 55435  
Paul Ives  
Director of Corporate Relations  
Phone: (952) 835-6418 x.30

<http://www.stritch.edu/>

#### **Operation Homelink™**

**Free computers for spouses or parents of deployed soldier in ranks E1-E5-** Operation Homelink™ provides free refurbished computers to the spouses or parents of junior enlisted (E1 –E5) U.S. deployed service men and women enabling email

communication with their loved one deployed overseas. We offer this service on behalf of our Donor Corporations as a way to demonstrate their support of our brave men and women serving their country.

<http://www.operationhomelink.org>

**Operation Up Link – free phone cards**

<https://www.operationuplink.org>

**Any Soldier**

Want to send your support to a Soldier in harm's way, but have no idea of what to send, who to send it to, or how to send it? For Soldiers only to sign up for sponsoring soldier care packages for theater.

<http://anysoldier.com/ForSoldiersOnly.cfm>

**Operation Shoe Box. – free shoe box care packages**

<http://www.operationshoobox.com>

**Treat the Troops – free cookies**

<http://www.treatthetroops.org>

**Write a thank our to a Soldier**

Everyone one is encouraged to write a thank you note to a military service person.

<http://www.operationdearabby.net>

**Free Care Packages**

<http://bluestarmoms.org/care.html>

**Free Air travel for Emergency Leave for the family members of injured soldiers to travel to Medical facility**

<http://www.heromiles.org>

**Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc -Airline discounts for R & R.**

<http://www.bluestarmothers.org/airlinespecials.php>

**Blue Star Mothers of America- lowest airfare available**

<http://bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html>

**Free Books, DVD's, CD's**

<http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/forum/index.php>

**Military Mom's-Free care packages (your family member signs up to have sent to you).**

<http://www.militarymoms.net/sot.html>

**Operation Military Pride -Free care packages.**

<http://operationmilitarypride.org/smsignup.html>

**Treats for Troops -Free gifts and care packages.**

<https://www.treatsfortroops.com/registration/index.php>

### **US Army Freedom Team Salute Program**

The FTS program provides Soldiers with a means to recognize their supporters: spouses, parents, and employers of National Guard and Reserve Soldiers. Honorably discharged veterans may likewise nominate themselves for recognition under this program.

Nominees will receive an Army lapel pin, an Army decal, a certificate and letter signed by the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army thanking them for their support.

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

### **United Way 211**

Your community help line, free confidential information 24/7

Find local information about

Education	Senior Services
Health Services	Childcare
Legal Help	Food
Transportation	Housing
Counseling	Employment
Youth Services	And much more

<http://www.211unitedway.org>

### **Children's Home Society & Family Services Employee Assistance Programs**

651-635-0477 or 800-332-0477

<http://www.chsfs.org>

Back in school issues- Get smart about bullying.

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/bullies.html> (for parents)

National PTA Safeguarding Your Child at school, helping children deal with a school Bully

[http://www.pta.org/archive\\_article\\_details\\_1117637268750.html](http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1117637268750.html)

### **Service Songs for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard**

<http://www.brownielocks.com/ArmyGoesRollingAlongVoices.html>

### **Operation AC – sending supplies to our troops**

Operation AC offers the premier method for Americans to adopt US Military Service Members online in realtime, shop for their needs in the Virtual CareBox...

### **Virtual Carebox launches!**

Operation AC offers the premier method for Americans to adopt US Military Service Members online in realtime, shop for their needs in the Virtual CareBox, Operation AC staff packs and ships everything for you and your service member gets their Virtual CareBox from us expedited. ALL purchases for your adopted service member are 100% tax deduction eligible. Operation AC is a non-profit 501(c) charity.

Virtual CareBox is the LOWEST cost ANYWHERE for Altama Ripple Sole Combat Boots, the new Altama Exo-Speed Desert Tactical Boot and the new US ARMY COMBAT UNIFORM made by Propper. We offer a large array of gear, electronics MP3 players, Playstation 2 games and consoles, and personal care items, px and mx gift certificates, AT&T international phonecards all for our US Servicemembers to choose and for sponsors to purchase for their adopted servicemember. You are getting them something they need to make their deployment easier, you are getting a trooper to help. Our troops get a sponsor who will let them know they are not forgotten and are appreciated.

We have always strived to get the troops what they want and need and be the very best at what we do. We have added staff, we have added warehousing and now we offer this to ALL members of the US Military and their supporters. Operation AC is a member organization of DoD sponsored, America Supports You network.

<http://operationac.com/>

### **Save and Invest**

SaveAndInvest.org is your source for objective answers, unbiased investing resources and straight-talking financial information and tools. It's a free service of the NASD Investor Education Foundation—helping you to protect yourself from costly mistakes and learn more about handling your finances. So there's no sales pitch. No confusing advice. Just the help you need to make smart decisions for your future.

<http://www.saveandinvest.org>

Additional websites

[Wounded Warriors](#)

[Operation Second Chance](#)

[Camp Lejune II Marine Expeditionary](#)

[Angels Of Mercy](#)

[Armed Forces Foundation](#)

[Azalea Charities Aid for Wounded Soldiers](#)

[Coalition to Salute America's Heroes](#)

[Comfort for America's Uniformed Services Elite](#)

[Fisher House Foundation](#)

[Helping Our Heroes Foundation](#)

[Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund](#)

[Kids for our Troops](#)

[www.national/military.asp](http://www.national/military.asp)

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

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

[www.forthefallen.org](http://www.forthefallen.org)  
[www.saveandinvest.org](http://www.saveandinvest.org)  
[www.americasaves.org](http://www.americasaves.org)  
[www.usacares.us](http://www.usacares.us)  
<http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>

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

[www.freedomisnotfree.com](http://www.freedomisnotfree.com)  
[www.militarybenefits.com](http://www.militarybenefits.com)  
[www.militarywebcom.org](http://www.militarywebcom.org)  
[www.military.com](http://www.military.com)  
[www.operationhomefront.net](http://www.operationhomefront.net)  
[www.servingthosewhoserve.com](http://www.servingthosewhoserve.com)  
[www.unmetneeds.com](http://www.unmetneeds.com)  
[www.americasupportsyou.mil](http://www.americasupportsyou.mil)  
[www.militaryconnection.com](http://www.militaryconnection.com)  
[www.resourcesforsoldiers.com](http://www.resourcesforsoldiers.com)  
<http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org>  
<http://www.operationhomefront.net>  
[http://www.socom.mil/care\\_coalition](http://www.socom.mil/care_coalition) SOF Specific  
[www.corporalnich.org](http://www.corporalnich.org)  
[www.OIFfamilyfund.org](http://www.OIFfamilyfund.org)  
[www.operationfamilyfund.org](http://www.operationfamilyfund.org)  
<http://soldierfund.org/>  
[www.waveandinvest.org](http://www.waveandinvest.org)  
[www.americasaves.org](http://www.americasaves.org)  
[www.national/military.asp](http://www.national/military.asp)  
[Operation Second Chance](#)

ORGANIZATION	EMAIL	ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES
4 Military Families.com	<a href="http://4militaryfamilies.com/">http://4militaryfamilies.com/</a>	
A Million Thanks	<a href="http://www.amillionthanks.org">http://www.amillionthanks.org</a>	
Air Force Palace HART	<a href="http://www.socom.mil/care_coalition/docs/Palace_Hearts.pdf#search='Palace%20hart%20air%20force%20program'">http://www.socom.mil/care_coalition/docs/Palace_Hearts.pdf#search='Palace%20hart%20air%20force%20program'</a>	
Alabama Job links - State Employment Department	<a href="https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/">https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/</a>	
Air Force Personnel Center	<a href="http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/">http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/</a>	
Alaska State Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.ak-prepared.com/dmva/">http://www.ak-prepared.com/dmva/</a>	
AllRetailJobs.com	<a href="http://www.allretailjobs.com/">http://www.allretailjobs.com/</a>	

Always A Soldier	<a href="http://www.amc.army.mil/alwaysasoldier/index.htm">http://www.amc.army.mil/alwaysasoldier/index.htm</a>	
America Supports You	<a href="http://www.americasupportsyoud.com/americasupportsyoud/">http://www.americasupportsyoud.com/americasupportsyoud/</a>	X
American Disability Association	<a href="http://www.adanet.org/">http://www.adanet.org/</a>	X
American Freedom Foundation	<a href="http://www.americanfreedomfoundation.org/">http://www.americanfreedomfoundation.org/</a>	
American Legion	<a href="http://www.legion.org/">http://www.legion.org/</a>	
America's Job Bank	<a href="http://www.ajb.dni.us/">http://www.ajb.dni.us/</a>	
AMVets	<a href="http://www.amvets.org/">http://www.amvets.org/</a>	
Any Soldier	<a href="http://www.anysoldier.com/">http://www.anysoldier.com/</a>	
Arizona State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.azdvs.gov/">http://www.azdvs.gov/</a>	
Arizona Workforce Connection	<a href="http://www.de.state.az.us/oscc/default.asp">http://www.de.state.az.us/oscc/default.asp</a>	X
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services	<a href="http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/">http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/</a>	X
Armed Forces Foundation	<a href="http://www.armedforcesfoundation.org/">http://www.armedforcesfoundation.org/</a>	
Army Aviation Association	<a href="http://www.quad-a.org/">http://www.quad-a.org/</a>	
Army Civilian Personnel	<a href="http://www.cpol.army.mil/">http://www.cpol.army.mil/</a>	
Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)	<a href="https://www.aw2.army.mil/">https://www.aw2.army.mil/</a>	
Association of the United States Army	<a href="http://www.ausa.org/">http://www.ausa.org/</a>	
Blinded Veterans Organization	<a href="http://www.bva.org/">http://www.bva.org/</a>	X
California Employment Development Department	<a href="http://www.edd.cahwnet.gov/">http://www.edd.cahwnet.gov/</a>	X
California State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.cdva.ca.gov/">http://www.cdva.ca.gov/</a>	X
Career Command Post	<a href="http://www.careercommandpost.com/ccp.cfm">http://www.careercommandpost.com/ccp.cfm</a>	
CAUSE (Comfort for American's Uniformed Service Elite)	<a href="http://www.cause-usa.org">http://www.cause-usa.org</a>	
Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund	<a href="http://www.cfsrf.org/">http://www.cfsrf.org/</a>	
Coalition of Troop Support	<a href="http://www.cotsupport.org/">http://www.cotsupport.org/</a>	
Coalition to Salute America's Heroes	<a href="http://saluteheroes.org/index.htm">http://saluteheroes.org/index.htm</a>	X
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment	<a href="http://www.coworkforce.com/">http://www.coworkforce.com/</a>	X
Connecticut Department of labor	<a href="http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/">http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/</a>	X
DANTES - Defense Activities for Non-trad.Ed. Support	<a href="http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/danteshome.asp?Flag=True">http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/danteshome.asp?Flag=True</a>	
Defenders of Freedom	<a href="http://defendersoffreedom.us/">http://defendersoffreedom.us/</a>	
Delaware Department of Labor	<a href="http://www.delawareworks.com/default.shtml">http://www.delawareworks.com/default.shtml</a>	X
Dept. of Navy Civilians Human Resources	<a href="https://www.donhr.navy.mil/Default.asp">https://www.donhr.navy.mil/Default.asp</a>	
Disabled American Veterans	<a href="http://www.dav.org/">http://www.dav.org/</a>	X
District of Columbia Dept. of Employment Services	<a href="http://www.does.dc.gov/does/site/default.asp">http://www.does.dc.gov/does/site/default.asp</a>	X
Family and Friends for Freedom Fund	<a href="http://www.injuredmarinesfund.org/">http://www.injuredmarinesfund.org/</a>	
FirstGov.gov	<a href="http://www.firstgov.gov/index.shtml">http://www.firstgov.gov/index.shtml</a>	
Fisher House Foundation	<a href="http://www.fisherhouse.org/">http://www.fisherhouse.org/</a>	X
Florida Workforce Innovations	<a href="http://www.floridajobs.org/">http://www.floridajobs.org/</a>	X
Freedom Alliance	<a href="http://www.freedomalliance.org/">http://www.freedomalliance.org/</a>	
Georgia Department of Labor	<a href="http://www.dol.state.ga.us/">http://www.dol.state.ga.us/</a>	X
GiBill.com	<a href="http://www.gibill.com/">http://www.gibill.com/</a>	
Gold Stars Wives of America, Inc.	<a href="http://www.goldstarwives.org/resources-military-family.htm">http://www.goldstarwives.org/resources-military-family.htm</a>	X
Grief and Recovery.com	<a href="http://www.griefandrecovery.com">http://www.griefandrecovery.com</a>	
hadit.com Veteran to Veteran	<a href="http://www.hadit.com/">http://www.hadit.com/</a>	
Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations	<a href="http://hawaii.gov/labor/">http://hawaii.gov/labor/</a>	X
Hawaii State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.dod.state.hi.us/ovs/">http://www.dod.state.hi.us/ovs/</a>	X
Helmets to Hardhats	<a href="http://helmetstohardhats.org/">http://helmetstohardhats.org/</a>	
Helping Our Heroes Foundation	<a href="http://www.hohf.org/links.htm">http://www.hohf.org/links.htm</a>	
Hero to Hero	<a href="http://www.herotohero.us/">http://www.herotohero.us/</a>	
Heroes to Hometowns	<a href="http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/dav/lsn/LSN/BINARY_RESOURCE/BINARY_CONTENT/1832041.pdf">http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/dav/lsn/LSN/BINARY_RESOURCE/BINARY_CONTENT/1832041.pdf</a>	

Hire Veterans.com	<a href="http://www.hireveterans.com">http://www.hireveterans.com</a>	
HireVetsFirst	<a href="http://www.hirevetsfirst.gov/">http://www.hirevetsfirst.gov/</a>	
Homefront America, Inc	<a href="http://www.homefrontamerica.org">http://www.homefrontamerica.org</a>	
Homes for our Troops	<a href="http://www.homesforourtroops.org">http://www.homesforourtroops.org</a>	X
Idaho Commerce and Labor	<a href="http://cl.idaho.gov/DNN/Default.aspx?alias=cl.idaho.gov/dnn/idcl">http://cl.idaho.gov/DNN/Default.aspx?alias=cl.idaho.gov/dnn/idcl</a>	X
Idaho State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.veterans.idaho.gov/">http://www.veterans.idaho.gov/</a>	X
Illinois Department of Employment Services	<a href="http://www.ides.state.il.us/">http://www.ides.state.il.us/</a>	X
Indiana Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.state.in.us/dwd/">http://www.state.in.us/dwd/</a>	X
Iowa Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.iowajobs.org/">http://www.iowajobs.org/</a>	X
Iraq War Veterans Organization	<a href="http://www.iraqwarveterans.org/index.html">http://www.iraqwarveterans.org/index.html</a>	
Job Accommodation Network	<a href="http://www.jan.wvu.edu/">http://www.jan.wvu.edu/</a>	
Jobs4HR.com	<a href="http://jobs4hr.com/">http://jobs4hr.com/</a>	
JobsInLogistics.com	<a href="http://www.jobsinlogistics.com">http://www.jobsinlogistics.com</a>	
LocalCareers.com	<a href="http://localcareers.com/">http://localcareers.com/</a>	
Kansas Job Links	<a href="https://www.kansasjoblink.com/ada/">https://www.kansasjoblink.com/ada/</a>	X
Kentucky Office of Employment and Training	<a href="http://www.desky.org/">http://www.desky.org/</a>	X
Louisiana Works Department of Labor	<a href="http://www.ldol.state.la.us/">http://www.ldol.state.la.us/</a>	X
Maine Career Center	<a href="http://www.mainecareercenter.com/">http://www.mainecareercenter.com/</a>	X
Marines for Life	<a href="https://www.m4l.usmc.mil/">https://www.m4l.usmc.mil/</a>	X
Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation	<a href="http://www.dllr.state.md.us/index.html">http://www.dllr.state.md.us/index.html</a>	X
Massachusetts Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dlwdhomepage&amp;L=1&amp;L0=Home&amp;sid=Edwd">http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dlwdhomepage&amp;L=1&amp;L0=Home&amp;sid=Edwd</a>	X
Michigan Talent Bank	<a href="http://www.michworks.org/mtb/user/MTB_EMPL_EntryMainPage">http://www.michworks.org/mtb/user/MTB_EMPL_EntryMainPage</a>	X
Mil2civ.com	<a href="http://mil2civ.com/destiny/index.jsp">http://mil2civ.com/destiny/index.jsp</a>	
Military Assistance Program Central	<a href="http://www.dod.mil/mapcentral/">http://www.dod.mil/mapcentral/</a>	
Military Exits	<a href="http://www.militaryexits.com/">http://www.militaryexits.com/</a>	
Military Family Program	<a href="http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/joint.htm">http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/joint.htm</a>	
Military Homefront	<a href="http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/itc/MHF/MHF_HOME_PAGE">http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/itc/MHF/MHF_HOME_PAGE</a>	
Military Job Zone	<a href="http://www.militaryjobzone.com/">http://www.militaryjobzone.com/</a>	
Military OneSource	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx">http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx</a>	
Military Order of the Purple Heart	<a href="http://www.purpleheart.org/">http://www.purpleheart.org/</a>	
Military Severely Injured Center Support	<a href="http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/itc/MHF/MHF_HOME_1?section_id=20.40.500.393.0.0.0.0">http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/itc/MHF/MHF_HOME_1?section_id=20.40.500.393.0.0.0.0</a>	X
Military Spot	<a href="http://militaryspot.com">http://militaryspot.com</a>	
Military Spouse Career Center	<a href="http://www.military.com/spouse1">http://www.military.com/spouse1</a>	
Military Stars	<a href="http://www.militarystars.com/career_expos_dallas.htm">http://www.militarystars.com/career_expos_dallas.htm</a>	
Military, Veteran, Family Assistance Foundation	<a href="http://www.mvfa.org/">http://www.mvfa.org/</a>	
Military.com	<a href="http://www.military.com">http://www.military.com</a>	
Militaryspouses.com	<a href="http://militaryspouses.com/destiny/index.jsp">http://militaryspouses.com/destiny/index.jsp</a>	
MilSpouse.org	<a href="http://www.milspouse.org/">http://www.milspouse.org/</a>	
Minnesota Depart. of Employment and Economic Dev.	<a href="http://www.deed.state.mn.us/">http://www.deed.state.mn.us/</a>	X
Mississippi Employment Security Department	<a href="http://mdes.ms.gov/wps/portal/#null">http://mdes.ms.gov/wps/portal/#null</a>	X
Missouri Workforce Resource	<a href="http://www.greathires.org/">http://www.greathires.org/</a>	X
Montana Department of Labor and Industries	<a href="http://jsd.dli.state.mt.us/default.asp">http://jsd.dli.state.mt.us/default.asp</a>	X
National Amputation Foundation	<a href="http://www.nationalamputation.org/">http://www.nationalamputation.org/</a>	X
National Center for PTSD	<a href="http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/">http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/</a>	
National Military Family Association	<a href="http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer">http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer</a>	

National Veterans Association Foundation	<a href="http://www.nvaf.com/">http://www.nvaf.com/</a>	
National Veterans Legal Services Program	<a href="http://www.nvlsp.org/index.html">http://www.nvlsp.org/index.html</a>	
National Veterans Foundation	<a href="http://www.nvf.org/">http://www.nvf.org/</a>	X
National Veterans Training Institute	<a href="http://www.nvti.cudenver.edu/home/homePage.htm">http://www.nvti.cudenver.edu/home/homePage.htm</a>	
Nebraska Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.dol.state.ne.us/">http://www.dol.state.ne.us/</a>	X
Nevada Depart. of Employment, Training, and Rehab.	<a href="http://detr.state.nv.us/">http://detr.state.nv.us/</a>	X
Nevada State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://veterans.nv.gov/">http://veterans.nv.gov/</a>	X
New Hampshire Employment Security	<a href="http://www.nhes.state.nh.us/">http://www.nhes.state.nh.us/</a>	X
New Jersey Depart. of Labor & Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.state.nj.us/labor/">http://www.state.nj.us/labor/</a>	X
New Mexico Depart. of Labor - Employment Connection	<a href="http://www.dol.state.nm.us/">http://www.dol.state.nm.us/</a>	X
New York Department of Labor - Workforce	<a href="http://www.labor.state.ny.us/index.html">http://www.labor.state.ny.us/index.html</a>	X
North Carolina Employment Security Commission	<a href="http://www.ncesc.com/">http://www.ncesc.com/</a>	X
North Dakota Job Services	<a href="http://www.jobsnd.com/">http://www.jobsnd.com/</a>	X
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	<a href="http://jfs.ohio.gov/">http://jfs.ohio.gov/</a>	X
Oklahoma Employment Security Commission	<a href="http://www.oesc.state.ok.us/">http://www.oesc.state.ok.us/</a>	X
Old War Dogs	<a href="http://www.oldwardogs.us/">http://www.oldwardogs.us/</a>	
Operation Education	<a href="http://www.uihome.uidaho.edu/OperationEducation/">http://www.uihome.uidaho.edu/OperationEducation/</a>	
Operation Family Fund	<a href="http://www.operationfamilyfund.org/">http://www.operationfamilyfund.org/</a>	
Operation First Response	<a href="http://www.operationfirstresponse.org/">http://www.operationfirstresponse.org/</a>	
Operation Forever Free	<a href="http://www.operationforeverfree.org/about.html">http://www.operationforeverfree.org/about.html</a>	X
Operation Hero Miles	<a href="http://www.heromiles.org/">http://www.heromiles.org/</a>	
Operation Second Chance	<a href="http://www.operationsecondchance.org/About.htm">http://www.operationsecondchance.org/About.htm</a>	X
Oregon Employment Department	<a href="http://www.employment.oregon.gov/">http://www.employment.oregon.gov/</a>	x
Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.odva.state.or.us/">http://www.odva.state.or.us/</a>	X
Ourfallensoldier.com	<a href="http://ourfallensoldier.com">http://ourfallensoldier.com</a>	
Paralyzed Veterans of America	<a href="http://www.pva.org/site/PageServer">http://www.pva.org/site/PageServer</a>	X
Patriot Guard Riders	<a href="http://patriotguard.org/">http://patriotguard.org/</a>	
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry	<a href="http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/site/default.asp">http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/site/default.asp</a>	X
Pentagon Federal Credit Union Foundation	<a href="http://www.pentagonfoundation.org/support/militaryheroes.html">http://www.pentagonfoundation.org/support/militaryheroes.html</a>	
Post War Military Family Needs	<a href="http://www.postwarmilitaryfamilyneeds.org/">http://www.postwarmilitaryfamilyneeds.org/</a>	
Quintessential Careers	<a href="http://www.quintcareers.com/">http://www.quintcareers.com/</a>	
REALifelines	<a href="http://dol.gov/elaws/realifelines.htm">http://dol.gov/elaws/realifelines.htm</a>	
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training	<a href="http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/">http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/</a>	X
Safe Harbor	<a href="http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/SafeHarbor/">http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/SafeHarbor/</a>	X
SBA Veterans Business Development	<a href="http://www.sba.gov/vets/">http://www.sba.gov/vets/</a>	
Scholarships for Military Children	<a href="http://www.militaryscholar.org/">http://www.militaryscholar.org/</a>	
Snowball Express	<a href="http://www.snowballexpress.org/">http://www.snowballexpress.org/</a>	
Social Security Administration	<a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/</a>	
Soldier Reintegration Program. OR NG	<a href="https://143.84.228.21/reinteg/index.html">https://143.84.228.21/reinteg/index.html</a>	
Soldier's Angels	<a href="http://www.soldiersangels.org/heroes/default.php">http://www.soldiersangels.org/heroes/default.php</a>	
Soldier's Heart	<a href="http://www.soldiersheart.org/aboutus/">http://www.soldiersheart.org/aboutus/</a>	
South Carolina Employment Security Commission	<a href="http://www.sces.org/">http://www.sces.org/</a>	X
South Dakota Department of Labor	<a href="http://www.sces.org/">http://www.sces.org/</a>	X
Special Operations Warrior Foundation	<a href="http://www.specialops.org/">http://www.specialops.org/</a>	
Spouses to Teachers	<a href="http://www.spousestoteachers.com/">http://www.spousestoteachers.com/</a>	
TAOnline.com	<a href="http://www.taonline.com/">http://www.taonline.com/</a>	
TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors)	<a href="http://www.taps.org/">http://www.taps.org/</a>	
Tennessee Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/">http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/</a>	X
Texas Workforce	<a href="http://www.twc.state.tx.us/">http://www.twc.state.tx.us/</a>	X

The Military Family Network	<a href="http://www.emilitary.org/">http://www.emilitary.org/</a>	
The Military Coalition	<a href="http://www.themilitarycoalition.org/">http://www.themilitarycoalition.org/</a>	
Tricare	<a href="http://www.tricare.osd.mil/">http://www.tricare.osd.mil/</a>	
Troops to Teachers	<a href="http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_Web/troopstoteachers/index.asp">http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_Web/troopstoteachers/index.asp</a>	
U.S. Dept. of Labor	<a href="http://www.dol.gov/">http://www.dol.gov/</a>	X
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.va.gov/">http://www.va.gov/</a>	X
U.S. Vets	<a href="http://www.usvetsinc.org/">http://www.usvetsinc.org/</a>	
Uniformed Services Benefits Association	<a href="http://www.naus.org/why/why.html">http://www.naus.org/why/why.html</a>	
United Service Organization	<a href="http://www.uso.org/whatwedo/specialprograms/">http://www.uso.org/whatwedo/specialprograms/</a>	
United States Wounded Soldiers Foundation	<a href="http://www.uswoundedsoldiers.com/">http://www.uswoundedsoldiers.com/</a>	
United We Serve	<a href="http://www.corporateface.com/unitedweservemil.org/">http://www.corporateface.com/unitedweservemil.org/</a>	
USA Cares	<a href="http://www.usacares.us/about.htm">http://www.usacares.us/about.htm</a>	
USA JOBS	<a href="http://usajobs.opm.gov/">http://usajobs.opm.gov/</a>	
US Vets	<a href="http://www.usvetsinc.org/">http://www.usvetsinc.org/</a>	
Utah Department of Workforce Services	<a href="http://jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/dwsdefault.asp">http://jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/dwsdefault.asp</a>	X
Vermont Department of Labor	<a href="http://labor.vermont.gov/">http://labor.vermont.gov/</a>	
Veterans and Families Coming Home	<a href="http://www.veteransandfamilies.org/page/page/1349529.htm">http://www.veteransandfamilies.org/page/page/1349529.htm</a>	
Veterans Assistance Foundation	<a href="http://www.veteransassistance.org/ez.php?Page=3186">http://www.veteransassistance.org/ez.php?Page=3186</a>	
Veterans Intervention Program (VIP)	<a href="http://www.vipofamerica.org/index1.html">http://www.vipofamerica.org/index1.html</a>	
Veterans of Foreign Wars	<a href="http://www.vfw.org/">http://www.vfw.org/</a>	
Veterans Today	<a href="http://www.veteranstoday.com/index.html">http://www.veteranstoday.com/index.html</a>	
VetJobs.com	<a href="http://www.vetjobs.com/">http://www.vetjobs.com/</a>	
Vets4Hire	<a href="http://www.vets4hire.com/destiny/index.jsp">http://www.vets4hire.com/destiny/index.jsp</a>	
Vetsofcolor.com	<a href="http://www.vetsofcolor.com/destiny/index.jsp">http://www.vetsofcolor.com/destiny/index.jsp</a>	
Vetsuccess.gov	<a href="http://www.vetsuccess.gov/">http://www.vetsuccess.gov/</a>	
Virginia Employment Commission	<a href="http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/index.cfm">http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/index.cfm</a>	X
WA State Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.dva.wa.gov/">http://www.dva.wa.gov/</a>	X
Washington Employment Security Dept. WorkSource	<a href="https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/worksource/Employment.aspx">https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/worksource/Employment.aspx</a>	X
West Virginia Workforce	<a href="http://www.wvbep.org/bep/default.htm">http://www.wvbep.org/bep/default.htm</a>	
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	<a href="http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/">http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/</a>	X
Wounded Heroes	<a href="http://www.woundedheroesfund.net/">http://www.woundedheroesfund.net/</a>	
Wounded Soldiers	<a href="http://www.woundedsoldiers.net/">http://www.woundedsoldiers.net/</a>	
Wounded Warrior Project	<a href="http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/site/c.iqLT12OBKIF/b.1109075/k.9013/Headquarters.htm">http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/site/c.iqLT12OBKIF/b.1109075/k.9013/Headquarters.htm</a>	X
Wounded Warriors	<a href="http://www.woundedwarriors.org">http://www.woundedwarriors.org</a>	
Wyoming Department of Workforce Services	<a href="http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/">http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/</a>	X
Yellow Ribbon Fund, Inc.	<a href="http://www.yellowribbonfund.com/yellowribbonfund/about.cfm">http://www.yellowribbonfund.com/yellowribbonfund/about.cfm</a>	