



For Immediate Release
Nov. 10, 2014

Iraq War Veterans – Don't Miss Out on Ohio Veterans Bonus

COLUMBUS – Our state and nation will mark Veterans Day tomorrow. In Ohio, this occasion is an appropriate time to reach out to all Iraq War veterans and make sure that they have applied for the Ohio Veterans Bonus – the deadline for those who served in Iraq is Dec. 31, 2014.

To be eligible for this component of the Ohio Veterans Bonus, eligible veterans and Ohioans serving on active duty must have been boots-on-the-ground in the country of Iraq from March 19, 2003 through Dec. 31, 2011.

“The time is growing short for Iraq veterans to claim the Bonus, and we want to make sure that everybody who’s eligible has had the opportunity to apply,” said Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Tim Gorrell. “We’ve had great support across the state from veterans telling other veterans about it, in our county veteran service offices, our veterans’ organizations, individual veterans, and the families and friends of veterans. There are so many of us who have a connection to a veteran, and I’m asking everybody in Ohio to tell those who’ve served about the Bonus. It’s a great thank-you to our veterans from their fellow citizens, and no one should miss out on it.”

Through October 31, the Ohio Veterans Bonus program has paid 84,453 applications that total more than \$68.3 million in direct payments. While some of these applications represent multiple periods of eligibility, service in Iraq represents 24,091 of this total, the most of any period of eligible service. In October Bonus applications for service in Iraq showed an increase of nearly 57 percent over September. Currently, the Bonus team is approving more than 135 applications each week.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus will continue to be awarded to those who served in Afghanistan, or anywhere else in the world, since Oct. 7, 2001. Eligibility for the Bonus will end when the President declares an end to the war in Afghanistan.

Overwhelmingly approved by Ohio voters in November 2009, the specific criteria for award of the Ohio Veterans Bonus is service in the Armed Forces, anywhere in the world, of more than 90 days active duty, not for training, during the periods of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. For Iraq, the eligible period is from March 19, 2003 through Dec. 31, 2011; for Afghanistan, it is from Oct. 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President. Eligible veterans must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into the service, and must be Ohio residents at the time they apply.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is not subject to federal or state taxes. It pays \$100 a month to veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, up to a maximum of \$1,000. For veterans who served elsewhere, the payment is \$50 a month up to a \$500 maximum. Veterans medically discharged due to injuries sustained in-country can receive \$1,000, plus up to \$500 for months of service elsewhere.

Family members of those killed in action or who died from disease as a result of their in-country service can receive a bonus of \$5,000 plus whatever the service member was eligible for, up to a total of \$6,500.

Veterans needing more information or to request an application can call toll-free to 1-877-OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838) option 2, visit www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov , or visit any county veterans service office (see www.dvs.ohio.gov for an interactive map of the county offices). The Department has advertised the program extensively statewide through public service announcements on television and radio, newspaper and online ads, social media, at veterans' events, and through partnerships with veterans service organizations and other agencies. Post cards reminding Iraq veterans of the end of the Bonus were sent in June and July to veterans whose birth dates matched the likely age range of Iraq veterans.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus continues a tradition of bonuses to reward Ohio veterans that dates back to the Civil War; however, these other war bonuses are now closed.

-30-

Media needing more information, contact - Mike McKinney at 614-728-0235 or Michael.mckinney@dvs.ohio.gov .