



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

May 2011

Ohio Veterans Bonus



If you have a smartphone...
Use it to launch the Ohio Veterans Bonus website.

How do I do it?

- 1) Browse to your smartphone's app store and download a free QR Code Reader.
- 2) Once downloaded, follow the specific QR Code Reader's installation instructions.
- 3) Open the app and hold your phone camera over the code and capture the image to connect to our featured website content.



Questions about veterans benefits?

Call 1-877-OHIOVET
(1-877-644-6838)

Welcome to the second edition of the Ohio Department of Veterans Service e-newsletter! We intend it to be a key source of information about issues of interest to our community of veterans in Ohio.

We thank you for your service to our country. Because you're a veteran, you've earned a number of benefits that you may not be aware of. Most of these benefits originate at the federal level with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Based on the time you served, you may be eligible for compensation for injuries, health care, educational assistance, home loans or many other benefits. There are also a number of state benefits available to Ohio veterans, to include the Ohio Veterans Bonus as well as direct financial assistance from the county to veterans in need.

The place to find out what you've earned and to apply is your county veterans service office. You can locate yours in the interactive map on our department home page, dvs.ohio.gov, or by calling 1-877-OHIO-VET (1-877-644-6838). We will continue to provide you this newsletter each month. We hope it's of value to you and your family.

Ohio Veterans Bonus Update...

You may have seen this recently on the news, but we want to make every effort to sure that no eligible Veteran misses out on the Ohio Veterans Bonus – after all, you earned it by serving voluntarily in a time of war, so let Ohio say thanks.

If you're an Ohio resident who served honorably in the military for more than 90 days of active duty during the period Aug. 2, 1990 through March 3, 1991, or since Oct. 7, 2001, you may be eligible to receive the Ohio Veterans Bonus.

The bonus continues a tradition of bonuses to Ohio Veterans that dates back to the Civil War. The payment is \$100 a month to veterans who served during the eligible periods in the Persian Gulf theater, or in the Iraq or Afghanistan theaters, up to a maximum of \$1,000. For veterans who served in other parts of the world during these times, the payment is \$50 a month up to a \$500 maximum. Veterans who were medically discharged as a result of combat service can receive \$1,000, regardless of how much time they spent in theater, 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-theater service can receive a bonus of \$5,000 plus whatever the service member was eligible for, up to a total of \$6,500.



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So far, the program has paid over \$27.3 million to more than 33,500 Ohio Veterans and families. If you're one of the remaining eligibles, don't miss out!

Application instructions and a list of the documentation required is at: <https://veteransbonus.ohio.gov/>. For more information, call 1-877-OHIO-VET (1-877-644-6838) or visit your County Veterans Service Office.

Purple Heart Criteria Revised...

The U.S. Army has clarified the criteria for award of the Purple Heart in cases of concussions, a change which could open the award of the medal to many more Veterans of the current conflicts.

While the Army is not changing the standards to receive the medal, it says the clarification is intended to assist soldiers, commanders and Veterans alike in understanding the specific requirements for consideration and reconsideration for the award retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001.

Specifically, the clarification defines what constitutes qualification for the Purple Heart for concussion injuries, including mild traumatic brain and concussive injuries that do not result in a loss of consciousness.

The Army has also specified the procedures for reconsideration of previously disapproved Purple Hearts, for both active duty soldiers and Veterans.

More information and the appropriate points of contact are in the release below: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/media/releases/042911PHTBIRelease.pdf>

Stop-Loss Compensation Application Period Extended...

The Department of Defense has once again officially extended the period for service members and veterans to apply for retroactive compensation for "stop-loss". The deadline is now Oct. 21, 2011.

Service members and Veterans who experienced this involuntary extension of their military service contract have had several previous periods to apply. The most recent extension expired April 8.

However, President Obama signed a continuing resolution April 15 that included continued federal funding for the program through Oct. 21.

This special pay was created to compensate service members for hardships encountered due to involuntary service extensions between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible persons, or their



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beneficiaries, may submit a claim to their respective military services to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a stop-loss status.

To apply for stop-loss pay or for more information, including requirements for the application and links to different military services, go to: <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=14422>

Employment and Business Update (Time Sensitive!)...

The Ohio National Guard Family Readiness and Warrior Support Office is looking to fill 10 AmeriCorps VISTA positions in partnership with Second Harvest Food Banks to support Ohio Service Members, Veteran, and Military Family support programs in conjunction with the Ohio Benefits Bank.

AmeriCorps and Second Harvest Food Banks is actively seeking applicants to fill these positions. The position announcement will close by May 20 and final selections will be made by May 24, 2011 in preparation for an early July start date. The positions are located throughout the state.

To apply, go to <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?fromSearch=true&id=40714>, and click "Apply Now"; you will then be prompted to register for the site, once you have registered you will be directed to complete an application. Once you have completed the application you will be contacted by a representative from Second Harvest Food Banks and to begin the interview process. If you want more information about these positions, please contact Ms. Toni Metcalf at 614-221-4336, tmetcalf@oashf.org, or Mr. Gary Cooper at 614-336-7319 or gary.l.cooper@ceridian.com.

Additional employment assistance is available from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Their Veterans-oriented site includes a listing of the top career fields in Ohio and the top Veteran-friendly employers. Check it out at: <http://my.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com/VetCenter/Home.aspx>

Information on federal jobs for veterans is at: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>

What about Veterans interested in starting a business? The VA has a wealth of information available at: <http://www.vetbiz.gov/>

Education Increases Opportunities...

One of the best ways to enhance the prospects for finding a job – or to get ahead at a current place of employment – is to complete postsecondary education or technical training. Veterans currently have significant educational opportunities available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), primarily the Post/911 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill.



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The Ohio Department of Veterans Services wants to help you maximize your opportunities through two principal programs – the federally-funded State Approving Agency and Troops to Teachers.

The State Approving Agency evaluates and approves institutions and academic programs as qualified to educate veterans through the two GI Bills. Troops to Teachers assists Veterans holding any type of degree to obtain a teaching certificate. It also provides counseling and mentoring to place Veterans in high-needs schools, not only to teach, but to serve as positive role models.

In 2010, the VA spent over \$211 million in Ohio on education and vocational rehabilitation programs.

For more information on the State Approving Agency and Troops to Teachers, check out the Veterans Education area of the department's web site: http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_education.aspx

New VA Smartphone App Helps Cope with PTSD...

Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can strike at any time in one's daily life. Now Veterans can turn to their smart phones for help 24-7 with the PTSD Coach application, created by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense.

The app provides Veterans with accurate information about PTSD and makes it possible for them to track their symptoms. It also links them with local sources of support and teaches helpful individualized strategies for managing PTSD symptoms at any moment. The free app is now available for download from the iTunes store and will be available for Android devices by the end of the spring.

Additional information is in this VA release: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2080>

Specific information on the app is on the VA's National Center for PTSD website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>

Other apps available from [DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology](http://www.t2health.org) can be found at: <http://www.t2health.org/apps>

Getting More Online...

As e-commerce expands into more and more areas of our lives, the VA has launched a new site for Veterans who want to keep track of their records and claims on the web. Called eBenefits, it's designed for Veterans, those currently serving, Wounded Warriors, and Caregivers, and offers access to most military and medical records.

For more information, go to: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>



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VA Provides Training for Caregivers...

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is partnering with Easter Seals to provide in-depth Caregiver Training to Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans. This is in accordance with the federal Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010.

Family Caregivers and Veterans can now apply for this training and other services authorized under a VA interim final rule that was published on May 5. The package includes a monthly stipend, mental health services and access to medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), if the primary Family Caregiver is not entitled to care or services under a health plan contract.

Additional information is in the news release below:

<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2095>

Applications for the program are available at: www.caregiver.va.gov

Anyone needing assistance with the application process can call toll-free to 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387).

Benefit Available to Vets Participating in Paralympics...

Veterans in training for the U.S. Paralympics may be able to qualify for a monthly subsistence allowance from the VA. It's part of a new program designed to help disabled Veterans more easily take part in competitive sports.

The VA will pay the allowance to a Veteran with a service-connected or non-service-connected disability, if the Veteran is invited by the U.S. Paralympics to compete for a slot on the U.S. Paralympic team, or is residing at a U.S. Paralympic training center for training or competition. This means, the VA cautions, that not all disabled Veterans will qualify for the subsistence allowance, which will actually be administered by the U.S. Paralympics.

Information on the rates the VA allows for the stipend is at: www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/sa.htm

Applications for this allowance must be submitted through the U.S. Paralympics. For information about the Paralympics and the U.S. team, go to: <http://usparalympics.org/usoc-paralympic-military-program>