



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

February 2012



Welcome to the eleventh edition of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services e-newsletter! The newsletter is 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.

A Visit to Steubenville...

Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Tom Moe and other ODVS staff members visited American Legion Argonne Post 33 in Steubenville on February 7 along with the directors of the Ohio Department of Aging and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. The event, held the same day as Governor John Kasich's State of the State speech in Steubenville, announced a partnership between the three state agencies and local partners.

Director Moe briefed the veterans and others in attendance on the four legs of service to veterans in Ohio – the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA; the county veterans service offices in each county; the veterans service organizations; and ODVS. He gave a short overview on the scope of federal and state benefits available to veterans and encouraged all veterans to visit their county veterans service office to apply for what they have earned. Director Kantor-Burman of Aging and Director Kevin Miller of Rehabilitation Services also gave presentations on the mission of their agencies. All three directors answered questions following the presentation.

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Questions about veterans benefits?

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



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

The partnership that was announced is an initiative to link veterans and other vocational rehabilitation consumers with chronic disease self-management workshops and employment supports – with the idea being to help them either remain at, or return to, work. For more information, contact your local Area Agency on Aging; you can find the one closest to you by calling their toll free number at 1-866-243-5678.

Our sincere thanks go out to Post Commander Terry Channel and everyone at Argonne Post 33 for their hospitality in holding the event there. Thanks also to Jefferson County Veterans Service Commissioner William Demjan for emceeding the event, and to Jefferson County Veterans Service Office Executive Director Ed Mascio and his staff for their support.



Jobs for Veterans in Ohio...

It's no secret that transitioning veterans who've taken on the mission of finding a job face a tough challenge. But as the economy begins a slow recovery, there are positive signs that a long winter of veteran unemployment is thawing with a number of positive developments.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services partners with the U.S. Department of Labor to operate Job Centers in each county, usually centrally located in the county seat; while the Job Centers are open to all residents, they also contain veteran counselors.

In addition, Job and Family Services operates a web portal with resources to help build a resume by translating military experience to civilian terms. It also includes links to veteran-friendly employers as well as other resources:

<http://my.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com/VetCenter/InfoCenter.aspx>



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Job and Family Services is also partnering with the Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network (MAGNET) to host two Veteran Manufacturing Job Fairs in northeast Ohio:

- **Tuesday, March 6, from 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at The Job Center, 1040 E Tallmadge Ave, Akron, OH 44310**
- **Tuesday, March 13, from 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at The Employment Source, 822 30th St NW, Canton, OH 44709**
- Each event is open to veterans and their families. Applications can be made on site, with the potential for interviews at the fairs. For information about either event, call the Veteran Employment Representatives for the following counties:

| | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Stark | – 330-491-2639/2606 |
| Tuscarawas | – 330-602-2863 |
| Summit | – 330-630-3065/3059/4632 |
| Wayne | – 330-2645-7761 |

In addition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is hosting a “**Hiring Our Heroes**” **Job Fair** on **Tuesday, March 20, 2012** for a veterans event and hiring fair for veteran job seekers, active duty military members, Guard and Reserve members and eligible spouses **at Franklin County Veterans Memorial, 300 West Broad Street, in Columbus, OH 43215**. Read more about this event here:

<http://www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes/hiring-our-heroes-columbus>

But before you go to any job fair or other job-seeking event, there are certain common skills that you must master if you’re going to be successful.

First, are you physically prepared for your job search? Whatever type of employment you’re looking for, there are some common tips to remember:

- Do you have a current resume?
- Do you have a cover letter that’s geared to the type of job you’re looking for?
- Do you go to an interview or a job fair and present a professional appearance, e.g., suit and tie, or dress/skirt or pantsuit?

Despite all of us knowing that we have a lot to offer any potential employer, it’s often not easy to be able to present that. However, the Army and the Navy have developed online “cool” web sites that help veterans translate their military skills into terms civilian employers can understand.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

The sites, which stand for “credentialing opportunities online,” allow a veteran to select their military skill code and then see the types of jobs their training and experience translates to, as well as any certifications that are needed. There are no Air Force, Marine, or Coast Guard “cool” sites. However, the Air Force does offer similar resources on its Community College of the Air Force site, at the Credentialing and Education Research Tool (CERT) page; Marine skills are similar to those found in the Army and Air Force; and Coast Guard skills are similar to those found in the Navy.

Check out these sites below:

<https://www.cool.army.mil/index.htm>

<https://www.cool.navy.mil/overview.htm>

<https://augateway.maxwell.af.mil/ccaf/certifications/programs/>

The Ohio National Guard is also heavily involved in the issue of veteran employment. The Guard has partnered with AMVETS to create this web site, which features job postings for veterans:

<http://ohiovetscan.com/>

On the private sector side, the web site G.I. Jobs has published a list of 100 companies nationally who want to hire veterans in a variety of capacities. Five of these top 100 companies have facilities in Ohio. The links below provide additional information on these companies as well as employment with them, either from the G.I. Jobs site or directly from the companies themselves. Take a look and see if these companies may be right for you:

FirstEnergy:

<https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/fecorp/careers.html>

CINTAS Corporation:

<http://www.gijobs.com/2012Top100.aspx?rank=64&year=2012>

Progressive Insurance:

<http://www.gijobs.com/2012Top100.aspx?rank=67&year=2012>

Eaton Corporation:

<http://www.eaton.com/Eaton/OurCompany/Careers/?wtredirect=www.eaton.com%2Fcareers>

American Electric Power:

<http://www.gijobs.com/2012Top100.aspx?rank=82&year=2012>





Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Also, Home Depot is interested in hiring veterans for positions such as sales, cashier, freight team, and lot and department supervisor. Veterans can apply at store kiosks or at the following site:

<http://careers.homedepot.com.edgesuite.net/>

Federal Help for Jobs for Ohio Veterans...

President Barack Obama this month announced the creation of the Veteran Job Corps, designed to put veterans to work on numerous projects in national parks aimed at preserving and maintaining the federal park lands. The job corps is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's, and is expected to be a five-year program, with details to be announced. These jobs could also lead to full-time employment with the National Park Service.



In November, President Obama signed the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, which passed both houses of Congress with bipartisan support. The bill provides tax credits to companies that hire veterans and job training through the G.I. Bill for pre-9/11 veterans.

The Department of Labor partners with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to operate Job Centers in each county, usually centrally located in the county seat; while the Job Centers are open to all residents, they also contain veteran counselors. These Job Centers are also launching a new initiative called the "Gold Card" for OEF/OIF veterans. The "Gold Card" essentially puts veterans of the recent wars at the head of the line for services, and provides them counseling, information, referral to job openings and follow-up assistance. The web site for the "Gold Card," below, also contains a resource to help translate military to civilian experience:

<http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>

The National Resource Directory has developed a veterans job bank of vacancies nationwide for use by both veterans and employers seeking veterans to hire. This is part of the "Joining Forces" initiative sponsored by First Lady Michelle Obama:

<https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/jobSearch/index>



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Information on federal jobs for veterans is at:

<http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>

Helping Veterans Obtain CDL's...



Ohio veterans licensed on military vehicles will now have an easier time obtaining a commercial driver's license in the state, thanks to Governor Kasich's signature January 27 on House Bill 337.

One of the provisions of the bill establishes a waiver for the skills component of the CDL examination for those drivers who have experience driving military commercial vehicles, such as 2 ½ ton trucks and heavy equipment transports.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety is currently developing legal rules to implement this new law.

Back to School...

It's never too early or too late to plan to improve your skills through education – it's the surest way to find a job or advance in a current job. Today's Post-9/11 G.I. Bill offers the best financial incentives for veterans' education since World War II. Besides traditional degrees, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill also includes vocational training that wasn't covered under previous programs. Learn more at:

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

Ohio's system of public colleges and universities provides veterans plenty of choice in where to pursue their education. These institutions offer hundreds of academic disciplines, many that can lead directly to a lucrative career. The state has initiated several measures in recent years to make it easier for veterans to get an education here, whether they're Ohio residents or not, such as in-state tuition rates for all veterans, Veterans Administration (VA)-certified counselors at financial aid offices, and student organizations to serve veterans on campus. The Board of Regents site, below, will tell you more; or, you can search out information online for the Ohio public college or university you're interested in:

<http://www.ohiohighered.org/veterans>



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Smoother Transition at Redeployment...

The VA wants to make it easier for veterans returning from deployment to get signed up for their health benefits, and it's partnering with the First Army at Camp Shelby, Miss., to get it done.

The agency is launching a streamlined version of its online application for VA health benefits (VA Form 1010EZ) for servicemembers who return to Camp Shelby from their deployment. VA will take it to demobilization sites nationwide by early spring 2012.

VA Director Eric K. Shinseki said this new system will reduce a 10-day process to three days. It will allow the enrollment for health care to be taken care of during a regularly scheduled briefing as part of unit demobilization. Read more about it here:

http://dvs.ohio.gov/Portals/0/library/odvs/news/archive/2012/Enroll_Demob.pdf

Settlement Helps Military Wrongly Foreclosed On...



U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced on February 9 that the Department of Justice entered into a settlement agreement with the nation's five largest mortgage servicers that helps protect the rights of military homeowners. This agreement could mean a payment from the total \$25 billion settlement to military homeowners who were wrongly foreclosed on.

Under the terms of the settlement, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Wells Fargo & Company, Citigroup Inc. and Ally Financial Inc. (formerly GMAC) have agreed to conduct a full review, overseen by the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, to determine whether any service members were foreclosed on in violation of the Service members Civil Relief Act (SCRA)

since Jan. 1, 2006. Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Ally will be required to provide any service member who was a victim of a wrongful foreclosure a minimum payment of \$116,785 plus the service member's lost equity and interest for violating the SCRA. The service member's payment could be higher as a result of the review conducted by the banking regulators.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Read more details in the release here:

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/February/12-crt-191.html>

The VA also offers toll-free assistance for veterans who are having difficulties with their mortgage or need information about VA home loans. The number is 1-877-827-3702.

Additional Funding Requested for VA...

Speaking of the VA, the fiscal year 2013 budget submitted by President Barack Obama to Congress on February 13 carried a request to increase the VA's budget by 10.5 percent. The total request tops \$140 billion in spending on veterans' programs.

Highlights of the proposed budget include \$52.7 billion for medical care, a 4.1 percent increase from the fiscal year 2012 level. The VA believes this will be sufficient to care for the 6.33 million veterans estimated to use VA medical care in the next year, 610,000 of whom are veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. Another 1.25 million veterans are expected to file for disability benefits, representing a 4 percent increase.

More information on the VA's budget request is at:

<http://www.va.gov/budget/products.asp>

What a Bonus...

The Ohio Veterans Bonus team continues to work every day to award bonus dollars to veterans of the Persian Gulf War era and veterans of the era of today's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We ask all veterans to review the information below, and if you're eligible, take the time to apply! If you've gotten your bonus, then please pass this information along to other veterans so that they can get theirs! Whatever era you served, please share this with today's veterans. Many will not take the time





Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

to apply unless they hear about it from someone else who served.

To be eligible for the bonus, you must be –

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.

The bonus 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.

This bonus is not subject to either federal or state taxes.

Application instructions and a list of the documentation required is at:

https://veteransbonus.ohio.gov/odvs_web/Default.aspx.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is the state's way of saying thanks for the service our veterans have given. It was approved overwhelmingly by state voters in November 2009.

For more information, call 1-877-OHIO-VET (1-877-644-6838) or, you can visit your County Veterans Service Office to apply. To find your local office, see the Ohio map at: <http://dvs.ohio.gov/>

Help for Taxes...

You may have heard it said that the only two sure things in life are death and taxes, and hopefully filing taxes doesn't hasten the onset of the second!

The filing deadline this year for both federal and state taxes is April 18. But if you are currently serving in any military component, or are in a retired military status, Ohio has some very important tax benefits.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Also, if you're military, there's tax help available specifically for military families from the Ohio Society of CPA's. Read about this free service in the news story here:

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/business/2012/01/30/Military-families-can-get-free-help-in-filing-taxes.html>



Important tax tips to remember: the military income of state residents who are active military but stationed outside Ohio is not taxable for either state income or school district income tax. National Guard and Reserve members who perform duty of 30 days or more outside Ohio are also exempt from state income and school district income tax on their military income for that period. Military retirees and their survivors are also not taxed on their pensions by the state or school districts, and federal civil service retirees are exempt on the amount of their pension that is attributable to military service.

Additionally, anyone who received an Ohio Veterans Bonus for service during the period of the Persian Gulf War or since Oct. 7, 2001 is exempt from both federal and state taxes.

The Ohio Department of Taxation has additional information and answers to common questions at:

http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/ohio_individual/individual/military_tax_provisions.stm

The Department of Taxation's home page also has links to file electronically, and provide help with a number of other tax questions:

<http://tax.ohio.gov/>

February is African-American History Month...

This month our nation celebrates the achievements of African-Americans throughout history.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

In Ohio, African-America veterans can be justly proud of their contributions to Ohio's military heritage and to that of our country as a whole.

African-Americans have served with distinction in every conflict, but in Ohio history, the first formal African-American unit was formed during the Civil War as part of the Union Army. Called the "Black Brigade of Cincinnati," the 127th Ohio Volunteer Infantry was recruited in 1863 and fought in many battles in Virginia through to the war's end. Find out more about this historic regiment at:

<http://www.ohiocivilwar150.org/omeka/exhibits/show/fighting-for-freedom/the-cincinnati-black-brigade/127th-ovi->

Ohioans also served during the Indian Wars in the "Buffalo Soldiers" regiments of cavalry and infantry that fought on the frontiers, and in segregated units in the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II. The U.S. Armed Forces did not integrate until ordered to do so by President Harry Truman in 1948.

The most famous African-American military unit is arguably the Tuskegee Airmen, portrayed in the current film "Redtails." The men in this program were trained at airfields in the South to do all aviation jobs in units commanded by African-Americans, which was not common in the segregated military. The men in these units fought the prejudice of America, even as they trained to fight America's enemies. The fighter squadron formed from these airmen, the 332nd Fighter Group, served in Europe and became one of the most famous American units in the entire war.



Following World War II, the 477th Composite Group, consisting of fighter, bomber and support squadrons of Tuskegee Airmen, was stationed at Lockbourne Field – today's Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base – in Columbus. Commanded by Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the Group remained at Lockbourne until it was inactivated in 1949. Col. Davis went on to become the first African-American general officer in the Air Force, and retired as a Lieutenant General.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

You can read more about the Tuskegee Airmen here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_Airmen

Today, Ohio boasts an active Ohio Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen. This chapter brought the story of these famed aviators to the Ohio National Guard in a February 2 ceremony at Beightler Armory. These distinguished visitors included one of the original Airmen, aircraft mechanic Paul Menefield. A total of 961 pilots and 15,000 men of all military air corps skills comprised the Tuskegee Airmen. The ceremony at Beightler was both moving and educational at the same time.

The most emotional moment, however, came early on when Chapter President Edward Morast said, "I'll ask all the Tuskegee Airmen to stand up and salute the men and women who guard our freedom today."

Tuskegee Airmen, and all African-American veterans, we salute you. Thanks to each and every one of you for your service to our nation.