



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

January 2012

Finding a job is often a veteran's greatest challenge. Info in this newsletter has been designed to help vets find employment (pgs 1-4).



Questions about veterans benefits?

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

Welcome to the tenth 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.

Veterans Finding Jobs...

There's positive news to report this month from the front of veterans finding jobs in Ohio.

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.qijobs.com/2012Top100.aspx?rank=64&year=2012>



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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>

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/>

As all veterans know, actually getting a job is a tough mission to accomplish. But there are also certain common skills you'll need to employ 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. 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.



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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/>

Both Ohio and the federal government are focused on veteran employment in a number of ways.

Ohio job assistance:

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 translate military experience to civilian terms. It also includes links to veteran-friendly employers as well as other resources, such as resume assistance:

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

The Ohio National Guard has partnered with AMVETS to create a web site with job postings for veterans:

<http://ohiovetscan.com/>

Federal employment assistance:

President Barack Obama last month 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. The 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.





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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>

Information on federal jobs for veterans is at:

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

Going to School...

There is no denying that one of the best ways to find a job or get ahead in the job you have is through education. Right now, the 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.qibill.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 will tell you more; check it out below, or search out information online for the Ohio public college or university you’re interested in:

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



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Ohio Veterans Bonus Update...

As of the end of 2011, over 52,000 applications were approved for the Ohio Veterans Bonus, paying nearly \$43.4 million to Ohio veterans, resident service members and families. This valuable program, approved overwhelmingly by state voters in November 2009, is Ohio's way of saying thanks for the service our veterans have given.

And so we continue to spin the groove in this particular record, because we believe it is vitally important to keep the Bonus uppermost in the minds of everyone in our veterans' community. We know that more veterans return each day, and there are likely many others who have simply put it off.

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 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.

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

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

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/>





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If You Served, You've Earned...

Every veteran, no matter what era they've served, has likely earned a number of benefits that can help them today.

Beside the Ohio Veterans Bonus, Ohio offers loans for homes and business, assistance with educational programs and discounts on license plates, among others.

At the federal level, the VA has numerous health care, education, home loan, and pension benefits.

How do you find out what you're qualified for and get started on the application process? Go to your local county veterans service office; there's one in each of Ohio's 88 counties.



Find out more about state benefits here (scroll down to "Veterans Benefits"):
<http://dvs.ohio.gov/>

This booklet has an overview of all federal veterans benefits:
http://www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/federal_benefits.pdf

And the place to apply is your Ohio county veterans service office:
http://dvs.ohio.gov/home/county_veterans_service_officers.aspx

Recent Medical Discharges, Take Note...

Veterans who were medically discharged between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009, may be able to change their disability rating and thus increase the range of benefits available to them.

The DoD Physical Disability Board of Review is re-evaluating Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) disability ratings for some veterans who were medically separated between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2009, to be sure that a correct disability rating was made.

Veterans who received a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less and were not found eligible for retirement can apply to have their MEB/PEB disability rating reviewed for fairness, consistency, and accuracy.





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This also applies to former reserve members with greater than 20 years of total federal military service but fewer than 20 years of active duty, who meet the above criteria.

For more information about the PDBR and how to apply, go to:

http://www.health.mil/About_MHS/Organizations/MHS_Offices_and_Programs/PDBR.aspx

If you have questions about the process, contact: PDBRPA@afncr.af.mil

Holocaust Remembrance...

More than 65 years have passed since American troops liberated Nazi concentration camps near the end of the war in Europe during World War II, and a group at Ohio State University is seeking out the liberators of those camps to help bring the story of the Holocaust to audiences of today.



The Holocaust Awareness Council at Ohio State University promotes public education about the Nazi extermination of the Jewish people and other European minorities and rebuts those who deny it happened, so that no one will ever again endure the suffering of those times.

The Council is planning a number of educational sessions for April, and would love to hear from veterans who liberated the camps to collect their remembrances and possibly to speak at the events.

If you're a veteran who participated in the liberation, one of your loved ones is, or you know a liberator, please contact Mary Giardina at Ohio State. Her e-mail address is:

Giardina.29@osu.edu

'Tis Another Kind of Season...

The holiday season has passed, and we've all moved ahead into 2012. But there's still one season from 2011 that must be dealt with – the tax filing season.

The deadline to file federal and state returns this year for 2011 is Once again, the time to file annual tax returns is upon us. This year's federal and state deadline 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.



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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/>



Where There's Taxes, There's Scams...

As noted above, the tax filing season is upon us – and the VA wants all veterans to be aware of a number of scams that impersonate the IRS. You will generally see these scams during and right after filing season, so take a look below and don't let yourself get fooled.

Refund Scam — This is the most frequent IRS-impersonation scam seen by the IRS. In this phishing scam, a bogus e-mail claiming to come from the IRS tells the consumer that he or she is eligible to receive a tax refund for a specified amount. It may use the phrase "last annual calculations of your fiscal activity." To claim the tax refund, the consumer must open an attachment or click on a link contained in the e-mail to access and complete a claim form. The form requires the entry of personal and financial information. Several variations on the refund scam have claimed to come from the Exempt Organizations area of the IRS or the name and signature of a genuine or made-up IRS executive. In reality, taxpayers do not complete a special form to obtain their federal tax refund — refunds are triggered by the tax return they submitted to the IRS.



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Lottery winnings or cash consignment — These advance fee scam e-mails claim to come from the Treasury Department to notify recipients that they'll receive millions of dollars in recovered funds or lottery winnings or cash consignment if they provide certain personal information, including phone numbers, via return e-mail. The e-mail may be just the first step in a multi-step scheme, in which the victim is later contacted by telephone or further e-mail and instructed to deposit taxes on the funds or winnings before they can receive any of it. Alternatively, they may be sent a phony check of the funds or winnings and told to deposit it but pay 10 percent in taxes or fees. Thinking that the check must have cleared the bank and is genuine, some people comply. However, the scammers, not the Treasury Department, will get the taxes or fees. In reality, the Treasury Department does not become involved in notification of inheritances or lottery or other winnings.

Beneficial Owner Form — This fax-based phishing scam, which generally targets foreign nationals, recurs periodically. It's based on a genuine IRS form, the W-8BEN, Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding. The scammer, though, invents his or her own number and name for the form. The scammer modifies the form to request passport numbers, information that is often used for account security purposes (such as mother's maiden name) and similar detailed personal and financial information, and states that the recipient may have to pay additional tax if he or she fails to immediately fax back the completed form. In reality, the real W-8BEN is completed by banks, not individuals.

A Day to Remember a Great Leader...

On Monday, January 16, the United States and Americans everywhere will celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Each year since 1986, the Monday closest to his January 15, 1929 birthday has been set aside to honor the Rev. Dr. King, the greatest leader in the struggle for civil rights in our history. His "I have a dream..." speech at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, helped spur passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and teach generations that the only fair judgment of a person is by their character, and that equality is necessary for all of us to realize the dream of America. The speech is considered to be one of the greatest in U.S. history. He also earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Dr. King's life was cut short by an assassin's bullet on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee as he lent support to a strike by public workers brought on by unequal treatment of African-American employees.



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Although he was a man of peace, because he challenged segregation and other forms of prejudice, and was a vocal opponent of the war in Vietnam, Dr. King was a controversial figure in his lifetime. But his lessons endure and continue to inspire us today. Above all, Dr. King believed in equality and justice for all races, and where there is wrong, that wrong should be fought by nonviolent means.

His legacy is the America that we live in today; that while our country may not be perfect, we strive to be equal in our workplaces and our lives and respect the rights of all. This way of life is what those who serve our nation in our military and safety forces swear to protect.

Thank you, Dr. King.

