



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

March 2012



Two Ohio veterans recently became Knights of the French Legion of Honor for their sacrifice and valorous service in the liberation of that country during World War II. Eligible veterans can apply for this award through the French Consulate (story on page 5).

Questions about veterans benefits?

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

Welcome to the twelfth 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.

Jobs for Veterans in Ohio...

The job market for veterans definitely appears to be picking up nationwide, but it's still a challenge for veterans who need jobs. There are, though, some very concrete means of job assistance in Ohio.

The big news is that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is hosting a **"Hiring Our Heroes" Job Fair on Monday and Tuesday, March 19-20, 2012** in partnership with the local chamber, Leadership Columbus, Battelle, and several other organizations. It is open to 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.**

The two-day event's first day runs from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and features discussions with former military leaders aimed at helping veterans leverage their military skills and experiences in the job market. Workshops will be held that day to teach resume building, interviewing skills, and leveraging veterans benefits towards employment.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

The second day is the actual job fair, to be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Information on veterans benefits will also be available. Over 100 companies are scheduled to participate, including Battelle, Chase, Dana, FedEx, Nationwide, Staples, and Sears Logistics.

Pre-registration is strongly recommended.

Job-seekers should bring a current resume and be dressed professionally. For more information, and to register, see:

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

Remember, 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?

Help in Ohio to Find Veterans Jobs...

Every day in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is in an active partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor to operate Job Centers in each county, usually centrally located in the county seat. The Job Centers are open to all residents, but are also staffed with counselors who specifically assist veterans. Periodically, the Job Centers work with local partners to host regional job fairs across the state, which we'll tell you about here.



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* ★

One of the real challenges in veterans finding employment, as many of us know, is how to translate military experience into terms civilian employers understand. The military itself has help for this: 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.

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>



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Progressive Insurance:

<http://www.qjjobs.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.qjjobs.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/>



Federal Assistance for Veterans' Jobs...

President Barack Obama created the Veteran Job Corps in February, which will 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.

Congress passed the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 last fall with bipartisan support, and the President signed it into law in November. The bill provides tax credits to companies that hire veterans and job training through the G.I. Bill for pre-9/11 veterans.

The chief federal jobs agency, the U.S. 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. These Job Centers contain counselors specifically designated to assist veterans. The Job Centers have also launched an initiative aimed at increasing employment for OEF/OIF veterans. Called the "Gold Card," the program 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>



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

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/>

France Honors World War II Veterans...

Two Ohio World War II veterans were honored this month by the government of France and awarded the medal of Knight of the Legion of Honor.



Marion C. Gray, 92, of Groveport, was awarded the medal by Chicago-regional French Consul Graham Paul in a ceremony on February 26 at La Chatelaine French Bakery and Bistro in Upper Arlington. Bernard P. Ott, 91, of Massillon, was presented the medal by Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor and Ohio Department of Veteran Services Director Tom Moe at the Massillon Military Museum in a March 8 ceremony.

The Legion of Honor was created by Napoleon, and is presented to “...those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France.” People who have been named Knights of the French Legion of Honor include those in the military, government, industry and the arts.

Mr. Gray entered into service on December 11, 1944 as a combat medic in the 273rd Medical Detachment of the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Division. From June 1943 to September 1945, he participated in the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns. Mr. Gray was part of the first wave of soldiers to arrive in Normandy on D-Day and he was injured shortly after. He also participated in the liberation of St. Lô. He is a recipient of the Purple Heart Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the Europe-Asia-Middle Eastern Theater Medal with four Bronze Battle Stars and one Bronze Arrowhead.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Mr. Ott entered into service on February 23, 1943 and served as a Private First Class in M Company of the 71st Infantry Regiment, 44th Division. From September 1944 to July 1945 he participated in the Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns. Mr. Ott took part in combat in the Vosges Mountains and on November 17, 1944 he participated in the liberation of Strasbourg France. Mr. Ott was injured during combat in France twice. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Europe-Asia-Middle Eastern Theater Medal with four Bronze Battle Stars, the Good Conduct Medal and the American Theater Ribbon.

U.S. veterans of the liberation of France during World War II are eligible for the award of Knight of the Legion of Honor if they were injured in combat, or received a decoration for valor. For information, contact Claire March at the French Consulate in Chicago, at (312) 327-5221, or Claire.march@diplomatie.gouv.fr.

Back to School...

It's something that many of us may get tired of hearing, but nonetheless it's true – education is the surest way to find a job or advance in a current job. And there's definitely no time like the present to get started.



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/>

But where should you go to school? 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. These include in-state tuition rates for all veterans, 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* ★

Troops to Teachers, the State Approving Agency Help Guide Veterans and Maximize Opportunities...

Many veterans, at some point in their military careers, were teachers. You may very likely have taught common military skills or specific job-related skills to your peers or subordinates, or served a tour as an instructor at a military school. Today, that experience can pay off by helping you launch a civilian teaching career through the Troops to Teachers program.



The federally-funded Troops to Teachers program assists veterans who hold any type of degree with obtaining a teaching certificate. The program also provides counseling and mentoring to place veterans in high-needs schools. The military experience of veterans who take advantage of this program

prepares them not just to teach, but to also be something of potentially even greater importance to today's young people – a positive role model.

Troops to Teachers is also writing its own success story for those who take advantage of it. So far in 2012, 19 veterans have been employed as teachers in Ohio, compared to nine all of last year.

To find out more about Troops to Teachers, call (614) 728-4801 or toll-free at (800) 852-6064, or see:

http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_education/troops_to_teachers.aspx

What if you have a question about a planned course of study or a college, whether it will be funded by the G.I. Bill, or if there's any special requirements for veterans who want to attend? That's where the State Approving Agency comes in.

The State Approving Agency, which is also federally funded, evaluates and approves institutions and academic programs as qualified to educate veterans through the current post 9/11 and Montgomery G.I. Bills. There's much at stake for veterans' education – in 2010, the most recent year for which statistics are available, the VA spent over \$211 million in Ohio on education and vocational rehabilitation programs. Be sure that the money invested on your behalf is well spent maximizing your personal opportunities.

For more information on the State Approving Agency, see the Veterans Education area of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services web site:

http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_education.aspx



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Educational Assistance for Cleveland-Area Veterans...

If you're a veteran living in the Cleveland area who needs help getting started in higher education, the **Veterans Upward Bound Program** at Cuyahoga Community College may be just what you're looking for.

Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) is a free educational transition program for eligible military veterans, designed to help prepare for college-level courses in math, English, science and basic computer skills.

VUB offers a nine-week refresher program in a classroom setting with other veterans and an independent study program that can be completed in as quickly as twelve clock hours. The next nine week Spring session starts **March 20th, 2012** at the Cuyahoga Community College's Metro Campus.

To find out more, call (216) 987-4938 to schedule an appointment with a Student Advisor, or see:

<http://tri-c.edu/apply/specialinterest/veterans/Pages/VeteransUpwardBound.aspx>

Veterans Getting Bonuses...

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. As of the end of February, nearly \$45.3 million had been paid to 54,232 active service members, veterans and families.

If you haven't applied, please do so right away. If you have, then please pass this information along to other veterans. If you're a veteran of any era, please share this information with today's veterans. Many won't apply unless they hear about it from another vet.



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



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

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.

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/>

Your Service May Be Worth More Than You Think...

We certainly see and hear a lot, in this newsletter and elsewhere, about benefits for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But for Ohio veterans of any era, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services has one clear message – your service may be worth more than you think.

Veterans of every era qualify for some type of benefit. As a veteran, you may be eligible for health care, aid for education, a loan for a new home, compensation for a service-connected injury that's now causing health problems, pensions for low-income veterans, and many other benefits. Ohio's counties even have direct financial assistance for veterans in need.

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services wants to get you connected to what you've earned. The place to do that is at your local County Veterans Service Office where you can receive help applying for your benefits. Studies have shown that the veteran who gets assistance in applying for benefits receives about 40 percent more than they otherwise would have.

To get started, contact the County Veterans Service Network at 1-877-OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838) or find your county on the interactive Ohio map at dvs.ohio.gov.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Outreach from VA Health Care...

In late February, the VA began mailing out personalized health booklets to every veteran connected to VA health care. Each booklet explains the specific types of health benefits available to the veteran who receives it. The goal is to reach all connected veterans by 2013.

Read more about it in this VA news release:

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

If you – or a veteran you know – needs assistance getting enrolled for VA health care, contact your County Veterans Service Office. To find yours, see the interactive Ohio map at: <http://dvs.ohio.gov/>



Help for Taxes...

Tax time is rapidly approaching. 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.

If you're currently serving in the 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.



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

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/>

March is Women's History Month...

This month we celebrate the achievements of women throughout our nation's history. The history of women in our military is also filled with many significant achievements and firsts that are very deserving of recognition.

Today, more than 214,000 women serve in the U.S. military services. These services have seen the role of women evolve from gender-specific units to women serving alongside men in an increasing number of specialties, many which are just as much risk of combat as that experienced by their male counterparts. Women have served honorably and well, and they too have fought, bled and died for our country. The Department of Defense has collected stories of firsts, achievements and heroism of women from all services. You can read more about them at:



http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2012/0212_womenshistory/

There are over 1.85 million women veterans live in the U.S., including 61,000 in Ohio. They represent all eras and conflicts from the 1940's to today. If you are a woman veteran, we salute you and all your sisters – and we also give you our heartfelt thanks.