



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Sept. 2012



Welcome to the eighteenth 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, www.ohiovet.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.

New Mission: Get a Job...

First and foremost on the minds of transitioning veterans is finding a job to take care of themselves and their family. It's their first mission after the military, and it needs to be taken as seriously as any order. Almost without exception, it's the first thing we talk about in this newsletter each month – because it's information that everyone in our veterans' community needs to know and share.

The good news is that federal and state government as well as private and public employers are focused today on the issue of veterans finding jobs. The key is to leverage their focus and prepare to enter the civilian workforce.

Nearly every month, there is a job fair somewhere – and the Ohio Department of Veterans Services will always tell you about it through our social media, news update announcements to our listserv subscribers, and in this newsletter.

For veterans returning home after leaving service, getting a job is Job One. Ohio has organizations that want to hire veterans, and many means to help make that connection both in person or online. Read all the jobs information in this month's edition.

Questions about veterans benefits?

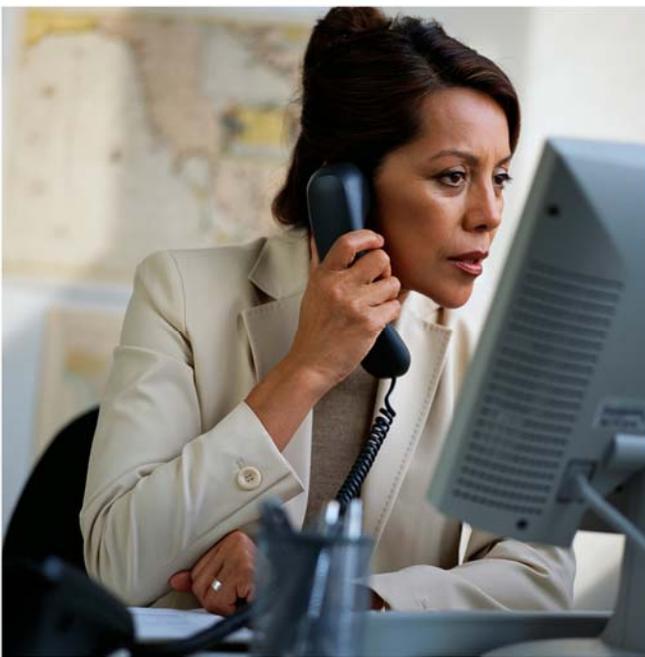
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But before attending any events or visiting an employer you're interested in, remember these common tips:



- Have a current resume;
- Have a cover letter that's geared to the type of job being sought;
- Present a professional appearance, e.g., suit and tie, or dress/skirt or pantsuit.

To prepare an effective resume, you have to be able to translate military experience to civilian experience. 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 is no Air Force, Marine, or Coast Guard "cool" site. 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.

The "cool" sites are below:

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

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

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

So prepare yourself for your new mission....and check out the additional employment information in the following articles.



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Ohio Job Resources for Veterans, In-Person or Online...

In-Person: Veterans have a personal resource for employment assistance not far away from anywhere they live in Ohio. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) 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; contact information is easily accessible by searching online or in the phone book.

While the Job Centers are open to all residents, but are also staffed with counselors who specifically assist veterans. Their primary clients are veterans with barriers to employment, of which long-term unemployment definitely qualifies. Counselors can assist with skills translation and resume preparation. The Job Centers also have resources to assist disabled veterans with qualifying for, finding and keeping meaningful employment.

Periodically, the Job Centers work with local partners to host regional job fairs across the state, which we'll tell you about here and in our social media.

Online: There's also a powerful tool for veteran employment in Ohio is sitting right on your computer.

Just one mouse click away is "Ohio Means Jobs," the state's job web site which has a real advantage for veterans by getting them to the front of the line for available jobs. The site is the result of a partnership between Ohio and Monster.com, and is on the web at Ohiomeansjobs.com.

Once on the site – at <https://ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/> – veterans should go to the "Job Seekers" area, and that's where the opportunities open up.

First, veterans need to post their resume and indicate that they *are* a veteran. What this does is present veterans' resumes first for any job that matches the qualifications they've posted in their resume. The resume should be reviewed every month and electronically "updated" – whether any additional information is added or not – to keep it refreshed and at the front of the line for jobs.

This site has a searchable data base of thousands of jobs across Ohio, with private business, federal, state and local government, and schools. While it's still advisable to check local ads in the places in Ohio you'd like to be, the Monster.com system will capture the great majority of employment ads from throughout the state.





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There's also a military widget on [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://my.ohiomeansjobs.com) that will automatically link to additional information for veterans. This includes resources to help build a resume by translating military experience to civilian terms. It also includes links to veteran-friendly employers – companies that have made a commitment to hire veterans – as well as other resources:

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

Companies Looking to Hire Vets...

In the past year, there's been a huge outpouring of support from many national and Ohio companies to hire veterans, companies like Goodyear, GE Aviation, Home Depot, Lowe's, Fed Ex, Kroger's, Aramark and Prudential Insurance, in addition to many local small businesses. We're always happy to share such news in these pages....and remember, the county Job Centers have the best information on companies hiring locally.

This month, though, we wanted to let our veterans' community know about two more national companies who are making a commitment to hire veterans.

The first is AT&T, which has numerous job postings throughout Ohio. The company is now specifically targeting veterans for employment. It's created a job page for veterans that, in addition to listing available jobs, has a military-to-civilian skills translator that can help applying for the right job. It's all on the web, check it out at:

<http://att.jobs/military.aspx>

The second is McDonald's, which recently held a hiring fair in Central Ohio and needs to fill a wide range of positions at both entry and management levels, both full and part-time. The company likes to say that 75 percent of its managers and corporate staff started off behind the counter. They, too, have specific career information that targets veterans. Learn more at:

<http://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en/careers/veterans.html>

More Help from the Ohio Guard and AMVETS...

The Ohio National Guard believes that a crucial aspect of maintain their force is finding full-time jobs for their part-time soldiers. To help this process, they've joined forces with AMVETS to find employment for Guard men and women who are looking.



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The Guard has partnered with AMVETS to create the web site below. It features statewide job postings for veterans:

<http://ohiovetscan.com/>

The Guard is also actively working with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) to help soldiers returning from deployments. The Guard is surveying soldiers in deployed units before they return home to determine how many need employment when they get back. JFS Job Center Counselors are then contacting these soldiers when they return home to work with them and help them find work.

VRAP Still Available...

Thousands of veterans have already signed up for the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), a new VA program to aimed at helping unemployed veterans aged 35-60 get re-trained and re-employed in high-demand occupations nationwide.



A second phase of the VRAP program is beginning with the new federal fiscal year on October 1. This phase is open to 54,000 eligible veterans, including those who were too late to be accepted for the first phase. Applications are being accepted now, so don't delay in getting yours in. Benefits will begin after the start of the new fiscal year.

VRAP is part of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, passed by Congress last year. The program offers up to 12 months of job training assistance under the Montgomery G.I. Bill at the rate of \$1,473 per month.

The first phase began in May 2012 and was open to 45,000 veterans. This number was exceeded prior to the September 30 deadline. Applications pending at that time are being considered for the second phase.

Please note that applications must be made online through the VA's eBenefits program. A web tool will assist veterans in working through this.

For more information, see: <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm>



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Just What Are eBenefits and My HealtheVet, Anyway?...

Accessing services online is becoming a bigger deal with each passing day – in fact, the VA is requiring that applications for VRAP be submitted electronically through eBenefits.

But what can eBenefits, and another new online portal, My Health eVet, do for veterans on a day-to-day basis?

eBenefits is a web portal that provides resources and self-service capabilities to veterans, service members, and their families to research, access and manage their VA and military benefits and

personal information. For example, through eBenefits, veterans can apply online for benefits, apply for a home loan certificate of eligibility, and check on the status of compensation and pension claims.

Active service members can find personnel information, learn about TRICARE health benefits, or view life insurance information, while family members can have access to health and education benefits information.

To find out more about this service and to sign up for it, go to:

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>

My HealtheVet (MHV) is the VA's personal health record for veterans and active service members. It allows you to keep track of appointments, prescriptions and lab results, view medical records, and access a wide array of health information. The "Blue Button" feature lets you collect all of your medical data into one file that you can store or share.

Find out more about this tool and register to use it at:

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/>





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CERT Gets Veterans Involved with their Community...

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a way for citizens to augment local emergency response activities – and many of the citizens best prepared to lend a hand are veterans.

The CERT program helps train people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities. When an emergency situation arises, CERT members can give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims and organize volunteers at a disaster site. CERT members also help out with non-emergency projects to improve the safety posture of their communities.



Veterans and currently serving Guard and Reserve members possess the qualities and many of the skills needed by the CERT chapters statewide to be a more effective force for emergency preparedness. The Ohio Department of Public Safety is actively seeking veterans to become involved in this vital community service. Some have already been trained and are an active part of their local CERT.

If this is a contribution you'd like to make, finding out where to get involved is as simple as clicking the link below to find the CERT program in your home county or area:

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cc/CertIndex.do?reportsForState&cert=&state=OH>

Make Your Vote Count...

Elections don't get any bigger than what's on the ballot this year – Ohioans will help choose a President, a Senator, and all federal Congressional representatives, in addition to deciding several state and local issues.

But for military service members who are serving out of state or are deployed overseas, taking the time to fill out the necessary forms to get an absentee ballot can sometimes fall by the wayside.





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The Ohio Secretary of State has taken several concrete steps in the past year to make this process easier through the "Military Ready to Vote" program. An information packet is available online that contains the absentee ballot application and answers the key questions asked by service members.

Please share the information at the link below with family and friends who are currently serving... so that all those Ohioans who are guarding our freedom can exercise their own freedom and make their voices heard this election:

<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/omv/MRV.aspx>



POW/MIA Recognition Day...

September 21 is the day set aside nationally to remember our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action service members. At this time, one soldier, Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl of Sun Valley, Idaho, has been a prisoner of the Taliban in Afghanistan since June 2009.

Twelve other service members missing or captured in Iraq since 2003 have, sadly, since been confirmed dead. Among them is Staff Sgt. Matt Maupin of Batavia, Ohio (pictured), lost in Iraq in April 2004 and found in March 2008.

In every conflict, families in our nation have suffered and endured to learn the fates of loved ones captured

or missing. Although prisoners have eventually been repatriated when conflicts end, the fates of 83,000 of the missing from World War II to date – including nearly 1,800 from the Vietnam War – remain unknown and unconfirmed.

Families, friends, comrades, our military, and all Americans remember and honor their lives. Joint service and government teams continue to search worldwide to account for each of our missing. This effort will continue, until everyone is finally brought home.



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Remembering 9/11...

This month we paused on Tuesday, September 11 to remember the terrorist attacks on America. No one who was alive that day in 2001 is likely to ever forget it. Our military has remained in the crucible of war since October of that year, and our police, fire and intelligence forces have been tested many times since. We've paid a high price in blood and treasure. But although we've adapted to many new security measures in the years since, no one has ever launched another successful attack against our homeland. For that, we can give thanks to our military who have served multiple tours on foreign shores and stand ready worldwide to keep us safe, and to our law enforcement, firefighters, first responders and intelligence forces who watch over us here at home.

