



August 2013



Veteran Newsletter



There is new leadership at the helm of ODVS.

Jason Dominguez, our former Assistant Director, is now Interim Director of the department.

Find out more about Jason in our page 1 article.

Welcome to 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.

Welcome to Jason Dominguez...

Last month we welcomed a new leader that we've known for quite a while – Jason Dominguez was appointed Interim Director by Governor John R. Kasich on July 22. Jason had served as the Assistant Director and Chief of Staff of the department since February 1, 2011. He replaces former Director Thomas N. Moe, who retired effective July 21.

His former position in the department provided Jason with an in-depth knowledge of the issues important to Ohio's veterans' community. He also brings a wealth of experience to his new job.

Have questions about veterans benefits? Call 1-877-OHIOVET (1-877-644-6838)



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Jason is a combat veteran of the Iraq War. He is also a former Congressional staffer who holds two degrees from The Ohio State University.

In 2005, Jason deployed to al-Anbar Province, Iraq with Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines. While part of Lima Company, he led his Marines through 12 major combat operations and 73 combat and security patrols. During the deployment, 22 Marines and one Navy Corpsman made the ultimate sacrifice, while 59 were awarded the Purple Heart.

After returning home from Iraq, Jason served as a Foreign Affairs and Military Legislative Aid for Congressman Patrick Tiberi in Washington, DC. While working on Capitol Hill, he was a member of the founding board of the Congressional Military Service Members and Veterans Association in the U.S. House of Representatives. Immediately prior to joining the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, he worked in Congressman Tiberi's district office as his Military and Veterans Affairs Case Worker.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Ohio State and a Masters of Business Administration from the Fisher College of Business, also at OSU.



Jason and his wife Raven reside in Dublin, Ohio with their son Elijah Aiden, born May 10, 2012.

Our department staff joins with the veterans' community to continue working with Jason in his new role for the betterment of all veterans and their families in Ohio.

Ohio Veterans Bonus Still Available, but Time Running Out for Gulf War Vets...

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is a thank-you from the citizens of Ohio to all citizens who served voluntarily, anywhere in the world, during the time of our three most recent wars. But if you're a veteran who served on active duty in 1991 during the time of the Persian Gulf War, you now have roughly four months left to apply. **The deadline for applications for veterans of the Gulf War era is December 31, 2013.**



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The law that implemented the Ohio Veterans Bonus set a deadline of December 31, 2013 for Persian Gulf War era veterans to apply. Other provisions of the same law that authorized the Bonus resulted in a December 31, 2014 application deadline for Iraq War veterans. No deadline has yet been announced for the Afghanistan War.

If you know an eligible veteran who hasn't yet received the Ohio Veterans Bonus, please share this information with them.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is available to veterans who served more than 90 days active duty, not for training, during the periods of the Persian Gulf War and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. This service can be anywhere in the world.



- **Persian Gulf:**
eligible period is from August 2, 1990 through March 3, 1991
(deadline to apply is December 31, 2013);
- **Afghanistan:**
eligible period is, from October 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President; and for
- **Iraq:**
eligible period is from March 19, 2003 to December 31, 2011
(deadline to apply is December 31, 2014).
Eligible veterans must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into service and must be Ohio residents currently.

The bonus pays \$100 a month to veterans who served in the Persian Gulf theater, or in the countries of Afghanistan or Iraq, up to a maximum of \$1,000. For veterans who served anywhere else in the world during the eligible periods, the payment is \$50 a month up to a \$500 maximum. Veterans medically discharged due to injuries sustained in combat can receive \$1,000, 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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Anyone needing more information or who want to apply can call toll-free to 1-877-OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838) option 2, or see:

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

Veterans can also apply for the Bonus at their local Veterans Service Office in their home county. To find the location of your county office, see the Ohio map and select the appropriate county at:

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

Your County Veterans Service Office can also help you determine what other federal and state benefits you're eligible for and help you apply for them.

File a Fully-Developed Claim for Faster Resolution, Possible Retroactive Benefits ...

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced earlier this month that veterans who file an original Fully-Developed Claim (FDC) for a service-connected disability could be entitled to up to one year of retroactive disability benefits. The retroactive benefits are in effect from August 6, 2013, through August 5, 2015 as a result of legislation enacted last year.

A FDC contains all records and supporting documentation. It's the fastest way for veterans to receive a decision on their claim, is typically the fastest way for Veterans to receive a decision on their claims because it reduces the amount of time that the VA, or the veteran, spends seeking additional evidence. VA officials also believe this will help reduce the backlog of veterans' claims.

County veteran service officers in Ohio are trained on FDC's and can assist in locating records to support them. Veterans should contact their local county veterans service office to begin the process of filing a FDC. These offices can be located, by county, on the map at:

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

To find out more about the VA's initiative with FDC's, read the release at:

<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2464>





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Ohio Holding Women Veterans' Conference in September...

The time to register is now for the Ohio Women Veterans Conference, set for Saturday, September 28 at the Aladdin Shrine Center in Columbus. Registration is from 8-10 a.m., and the conference runs from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Organizers say the event will live up to the theme, "Interesting. Informative. Intrigued?" The keynote speaker will be Jessica Lynch, who was severely injured in the ambush of her unit early in the Iraq War in 2003 and was rescued by Special Operations forces from an Iraqi hospital. Ohio's Adjutant General, Major General Deborah Ashenhurst, will also address the conference.



The conference will also feature a panel discussion on veterans' benefits, as well as entertainment by Sheila Van Dyke, and Army veteran and comedian.

Prior to the conference at 6 p.m. on Friday, September 27, a "Salute to Women Veterans and Military Spouses" Makeover Fashion Show will be held at the Hilton Columbus at Easton, a short distance from the Aladdin Shrine. Seating is limited.

Women today comprise more than 14 percent of America's Armed Forces. They have given their lives in service to our nation, and have suffered the same wounds and have many of the same issues as male veterans. They also have unique health care needs among both the young as well as the aging veteran population.

The bi-annual Ohio Women Veterans Conference, hosted jointly by the Ohio Department of Veterans Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System of Ohio, is an opportunity to meet other women veterans to share, learn and network. The event should not be missed.

Advance registration is highly recommended – the last conference in 2011 drew over 500 women veterans. For more information and to register, click on the link for "Women Veterans Advisory Committee" at:

www.ohiovet.gov



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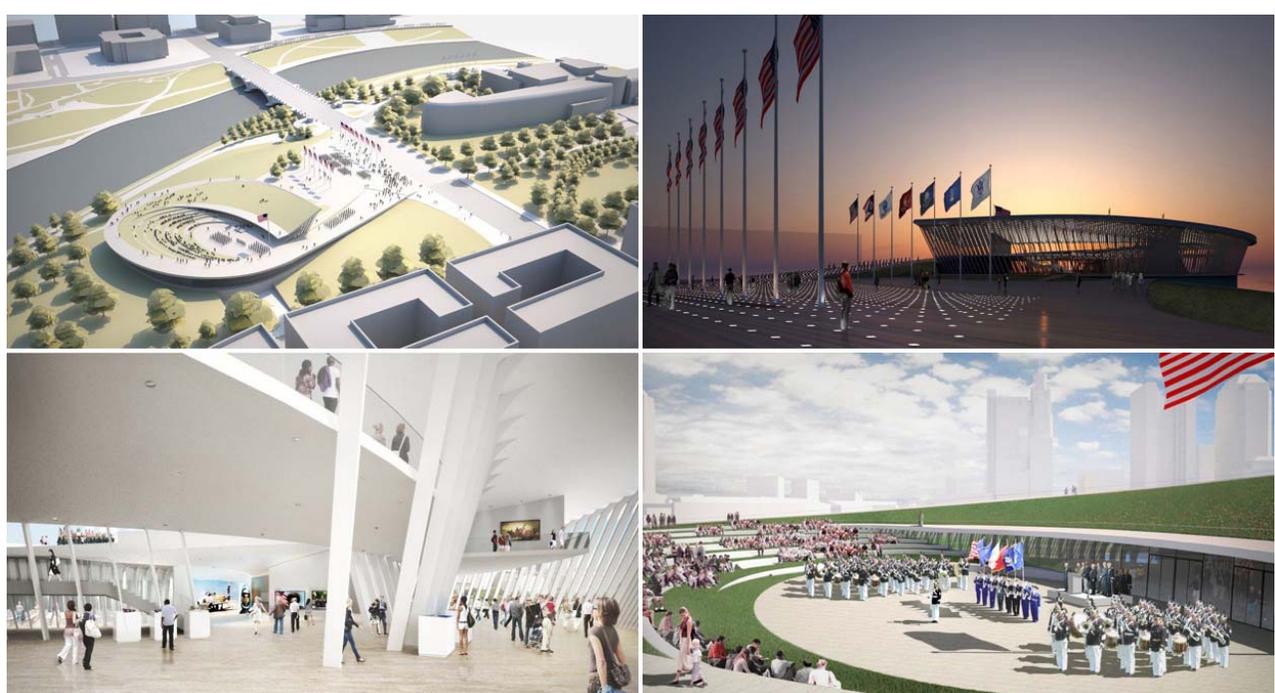


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Columbus Re-Development Effort Intends to Replace Vets Memorial with Veterans Museum, Amphitheater...

The Columbus Downtown Development Corporation unveiled plans this week to turn the eastern part of Franklinton – that part of Columbus west of the Scioto River, north and south of West Broad Street and west to the railroad tracks – into an educational, cultural, residential and retail district.

The project calls for the current Vets Memorial building to be razed and rebuilt into a glass-and-steel structure that would house a military museum, meeting spaces and an outdoor amphitheater for military and veteran-related events.



Other parts of the project include a Columbus Zoo exhibit to be constructed south and west of COSI. Also, 1,200 residential units would be constructed above first-floor retail spaces, along with a park built above an underground parking garage.

A number of public and private-sector leaders back the project, but there are a number of details, including some of the funding, that still must be worked out, organizers said.

Read about the project in the *Columbus Dispatch* (includes video):

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/public/2013/08/13/scioto-peninsula-announcement.html>

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Finding Jobs for Veterans in Ohio...

The latest information on job-seeking strategies for Ohio veterans is below. Even though we share a lot of this same information each month, we believe it's valuable to all veterans in search of employment. Please share this information with other veterans.



Companies Looking to Hire Veterans:

Ohio's insurance industry currently has over 17,000 new jobs, and a consortium of companies in the state believe that veterans are the ones best qualified to fill these vacancies. Find out more at:

<http://insurancecareers.org/veterans>

A number of other national companies with operations in Ohio have announced commitments this year to hire veterans. They include AT&T, Chase Bank, Walmart, Xerox, and Ohio's insurance companies. Information is available

on the individual company web sites; go to www.google.com to search by company name.

Schools and Companies Offering Job Training: Job training that could lead to employment in the emerging shale industry and in manufacturing is available throughout Ohio. Stark State College and Eastern Gateway Community College offer training targeted to shale jobs. Cincinnati State College offers training aimed at industrial jobs. Siemens Corporation offers training geared to engineering manufacturing jobs. Find out more at the schools' and company's web sites; conduct your search using www.google.com.

For a Job Fair, or any Employment Event, Be Prepared for Interviews, and Know Your Skills:

Before you attend any job fair or visit any employer, 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



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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 in 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/>



Online Job Assistance: You can also look for jobs online. “Ohio Means Jobs” is the state’s primary job web site, listing the vast majority of both private sector and public jobs which are open in Ohio. But for veterans, the real key to this site is that it gets you to the front of the line to be considered for the available jobs.

This site is a partnership between Ohio and Monster.com. Once on the site – at <https://ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/> , or simply type in “Ohiomeansjobs.com” – go to the “Job Seekers” area to find the opportunities for veterans.

But 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 – so employers on the site will see veterans’ resumes before they see those of other job seekers. 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.



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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.

This web site also has an area with other resources for veterans, to include translation of military to civilian skills and frequently asked questions about the process. The link is below:

<http://www.ohiomeansveteranjobs.com/infocenter>

In-Person Job Assistance: If you want to start a face-to-face job search, there's employment assistance available not far home. 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 also 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.

New State Budget Has Good News for Veterans' Posts and Ohio Veterans...

Ohio's biennial budget bill, House Bill 59, was signed into law on June 30, 2013 by Governor John R. Kasich and took effect July 1. The bill has a number of good measures in it for Ohio's veterans' community.

One of the premier provisions is a property tax exemption that benefits the posts of veterans' service organizations. Previously, these posts were exempt from paying property taxes unless their income exceeded \$10,000 annually. Many posts did exceed that cap because of rental income as well as income from other sources. The new budget changes those guidelines for all veterans' organization that qualify for exemption from taxation as non-profit 501(c)(19) or 501(c)(23) organizations by the IRS.

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Veterans' service organizations can now make up to \$36,000 a year before being subject to property taxes, and only rental income is counted towards the \$36,000. Posts must still register as a tax-exempt organization with their county auditor to receive the property tax exemption, but now have significant tax relief to continue their charitable work with veterans and in their communities.

Other areas of the budget that impact veterans are:

- Our Ohio Veterans Homes in Sandusky and Georgetown are able to keep on providing quality care for our most vulnerable veterans without any reduction in services, but at no additional cost in taxpayer dollars.
- It provides \$5.5 million to fund the War Orphans Scholarship for children, under the age of 25, of those who have given their life in service to the country during wartime, or who has become 60 percent disabled because of wartime service. This school year, all 831 applicants will receive financial aid. This aid amounts to 93 percent of the tuition at an Ohio public college or university. At a private higher-educational institution, they will receive 93 percent of the average cost of tuition at a public institution.
- The retired pay of employees of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is now exempted from Ohio taxes, putting Ohio on par with the federal government that provides these agencies the same legal standing as the five Armed Forces.
- Veterans service organizations that receive a state stipend are now required to prepare an annual report on their veteran- and community-support activities to the Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. The Director has to certify the report in order for the organizations to continue to get state funding. This increases the transparency of taxpayer dollars, and also gives these organizations the opportunity to talk about the charitable work that they do.

As a whole, the two-year budget is intended to keep Ohio moving on a positive track, and making a great place to do business, and to live work and raise a family. Its major provisions are:

- A personal income tax cut of 10 percent over three years. It also allows a small business to take a 50 percent tax deduction on its first \$250,000 of income – overall, a \$2.7 billion net tax cut.



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- An additional \$3 billion in federal, state and local funds to kick start infrastructure projects all over Ohio.
- An additional \$1.5 billion to our K-12 schools to educate students and develop the best strategies for student success.
- Support for higher education that rewards colleges and universities that improve their graduation rates, giving Ohio a more educated workforce that's attractive to business.

The new state budget renews Governor Kasich's commitment to care for Ohio's veteran community and better positions Ohio to attract more business investment and jobs.

Veteran Newsletter Puzzle...

This month's puzzle is a bit different. It spells out a particular word, if you get the clues right. Good luck!

Korean War Puzzle

Answers to the randomly listed clues below will fit into one of the eight columns of the grid. Once you've filled the grid with the answers, the circled letters (when read left to right, top to bottom) will reveal the solution to this month's puzzle, a phrase pertaining to the Korean War.

Clues

- Entered the Korean War in 1950, forcing Allied Forces to retreat behind the 38th Parallel
- Aided the North Korean-Chinese who were engaged in combat with UN Forces
- Site of the Battle of Taejon
- Ridgway's rank
- Straight that Truman sent the Seventh Fleet to protect
- Quartermaster training for the Korean War happened here
- First president of South Korea
- Where Marines began the 35 mile fight out from the Chosin Reservoir

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