



Ohio Department of Veterans Services

★ *Monthly Update* ★

Sept. 2011

On September 14, the first POW/MIA flag was raised at a rest area in Ohio--at the I-70 east rest stop in Licking County. Flags were then raised at all 45 rest areas operated by ODOT.



Thomas N. Moe, Director of the Ohio Dept. of Veterans Services, spoke at the ceremony. A retired Air Force Colonel, he was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for over five years.



Questions about veterans benefits?

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

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Ohio Department of Veterans Service 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.

Stop-Loss is Ending...

October 21 is the final date to apply for retroactive stop-loss pay, according to a U.S. Department of Defense news release.

The often-extended deadline to apply for a \$500 payment for each full or partial month served in a stop-loss status now appears to be at the final end date. All veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who were affected by the stop-loss policy should review the news release below:

<http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=14807>

Additional information and application instructions are at:

http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0710_stoploss/

If you were stop-lossed, or know someone who was, be sure to pass this along.



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VA Recognizes Other Sailors May Be Exposed to Agent Orange...

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has posted an online list of ships that served on inland waters in Vietnam for some length of time, opening the door for sailors and Coast Guardsmen aboard those ships to apply for benefits due to exposure to Agent Orange.

The VA has presumptively determined that those who served “boots on the ground” in Vietnam and later developed certain diseases, such as ischemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and chronic b-cell leukemias, became ill because of exposure to Agent Orange. Formerly, this determination also extended to the “Brown Water Navy,” to include the Mobile Riverine Force and other elements that served inland.



Now, the VA has extended this determination to certain ships of the “Blue Water Navy” and certain Coast Guard vessels that sailed the inland waterways or spent time docked ashore.

Navy and Coast Guard veterans of Vietnam should read the VA news release below and then review the list of ships to learn if they are included among those exposed to Agent Orange:

<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2156>

Veterans who need to apply for health care or other benefits related to exposure should visit their county veterans service office to begin the application process. Contact information for county offices can be located at:

http://dvs.ohio.gov/home/county_veterans_service_offices.aspx

Finding Work in Ohio...

All of us are well aware of what veterans have to offer to any employer. We have the work ethic to give a good account of ourselves each day, the knowledge of how to work with others to get things done, and hands-on experience in many diverse fields.

But knowing where the best places are to look, or how to translate what we’ve done into words that civilian employers can understand, can be a greater challenge than many faced in the military.



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There is help available, though. The Ohio National Guard and AMVETS have partnered to create a site with job postings for veterans:

<http://ohiovetscan.com/>

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services offers a site with resources to help translate experience; there's also links to veteran-friendly employers and other resources:

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

Information on federal jobs for veterans is at:

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



POW/MIA Flags Raised at Rest Areas Around State...



Maybe you've noticed the POW/MIA flag at an interstate rest area, flying just below the U.S. flag. The flags were put in place this month, the result of a partnership between the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio Department of Veterans Services.

The dream to see the flags flying at the rest areas came from Carolyn Maupin, mother of Staff Sgt. Matt Maupin, who was missing in Iraq for nearly four years before his remains were found. On September 14, Ms. Maupin was on hand to see her dream become a reality as the first POW/MIA flag was raised at the I-70 east rest stop in Licking County. Flags were then raised at all 45 rest areas operated by ODOT on interstate and state highways around Ohio.

You can learn more about this event in the news release below:

http://dvs.ohio.gov/Portals/0/library/odvs/news/POWMIA_flag_raising_news_release.pdf

You can also see a video of the ceremony here:

<http://www.OhioChannel.org/MediaLibrary/Media.aspx?fileId=132709>



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Make Your Vote Count...

Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted rolled out the Military Ready-to-Vote initiative on August 24. The program is intended to make it easier for military residents deployed or serving outside Ohio to get information about absentee voting and Ohio issues.

The principal feature of the program is a small, easily-carried packet that enables service members to request an absentee ballot, postage free, instead of obtaining an application from their unit. A new web site allows for tracking an absentee ballot to be sure it's received in time, an e-mail sign-up to receive reminders of election days, and links to ballot issues statewide and in specific areas to increase voter awareness.



You can learn more at the “Ohio Military Votes” web site:

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

Have You Gotten Your Ohio Veterans Bonus Yet?...

If you haven't, you and your family are missing out on some tax-free money that can make a real difference in your lives. Please review the information below, and if you're eligible, take the time to apply! We also ask that you share this with other veterans that you know.

The nuts and bolts of it are –

If you're 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, you may be eligible to receive the Ohio Veterans Bonus.

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



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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 info, call 1-877-OHIO-VET (1-877-644-6838) or visit your County Veterans Service Office.

Women Veterans Gathering in Ohio...

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services is committed to meeting the needs and serving as an effective advocate for the 60,000 women veterans in the state who answered the call to service. To recognize the service of women and connect them to the benefits they have earned, the department is joining with the VA and the VA Healthcare System of Ohio Network to host the fourth statewide Women Veterans Conference on Saturday, October 8, 2011, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Alladin Shrine Center in Columbus.

The keynote speaker is Janice Nark, a veteran of both Vietnam and Desert Storm. Janis has shared the podium with such dignitaries as General Colin Powell and President Bill Clinton. Her specialty is finding control in chaos. Other speakers included both serving military and distinguished women veterans. Forty vendors from various organizations will also be present.

The conference allows women veterans to share and learn the different challenges they faced during their decades of service, and after – and also how to overcome these challenges.

To sign up for this year's conference, or to volunteer to help in outreach efforts for women veterans please call (614) 752-8941. For more information about women veterans in Ohio, go to:

http://dvs.ohio.gov/committees/women_veterans_advisory_committee.aspx

Military Families May Qualify for a Make-Over...

A few years ago, Jason Thomas of Whitehall was the recipient of an extreme home make-over from the popular ABC TV show. Jason is a prior Marine Sergeant who, on 9/11, voluntarily went into the ruins of

Ohio
Women's Veterans Conference 2011
Save the date!
Saturday, Oct. 8, 2011
Aladdin Shrine Center
3850 Stelzer Road
Columbus, OH 43219
Register today!
Doors open at 8:00 a.m.
Conference begins at 10:00 a.m.



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the World Trade Center in New York to look for survivors. In fact, he and another Marine rescued two transit authority police officers who were buried in the rubble.

The American Forces Press Service reports that the show is now seeking other military families to showcase this season. The criteria they're looking for, according to the report, is to find people "amazing strength of character and who put their own needs aside to help others. Whether it's a soldier, a mom, a teacher or a fireman, we think deserving families are families who inspire those around them."

The people selected will also be families whose houses need major alterations or repair. To be eligible, families must own their single-family home and be able to demonstrate how a makeover will make a difference in their lives.

The show's producer is offering to cut through the red tape for military families. If you believe that you, or a military family you know, meets the criteria for an extreme home make-over, e-mail a short description of the family's story directly to Jackie Topacio, casting producer, at: jax@emhe.tv

The e-mail should include the names and ages of everyone living in the household, a description of the challenges the family faces, an explanation of why the family is deserving of a make-over or why they are a positive role model in their community, photos of the family and their home, and contact numbers.

The deadline for nominations is September 29, so those who are interested should act right away.

Additional information is at:

<http://abc.go.com/primetime/xtremehome/index?pn=apply>



Remembering 9/11...

This month we all paused on Sunday, September 11, and in our own ways, remembered the terrorist attacks on America of September 11, 2001.

At the 10th anniversary of that horrific event, we paused to remember those we lost that day, and to honor their memories.

We remembered the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guards men who have fallen in the wars that resulted. And we gave thanks for our military fighting to protect our nation on foreign shores, and for our local police and firefighters, as well as federal law enforcement, intelligence and security personnel, who keep us safe here at home.