



July 2014



Veteran Newsletter



Windows phone



Have downloaded the ODVS free mobile app yet? It's available for Apple, Droid and now Windows devices. The app provides a wealth of benefit information and access to county veteran service offices and the VA. It's now been upgraded to add contact information for state job centers, student veteran organizations on public college and university campuses, and more. Find out all about it on pages 1, 2.

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.

Mobile App Upgrade Gives More Service to Veterans...

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services free mobile app has been a huge success since its launch last November, and now the app has gone to the next level of service in an upgrade released this month.

Version 1.3.0 of the app expands its availability beyond Apple and Android devices to now also encompass Windows devices. In addition, the upgrade includes additional resources to help veterans who are looking for work, and provides assistance to student veterans and news of interest to Ohio's veteran community.



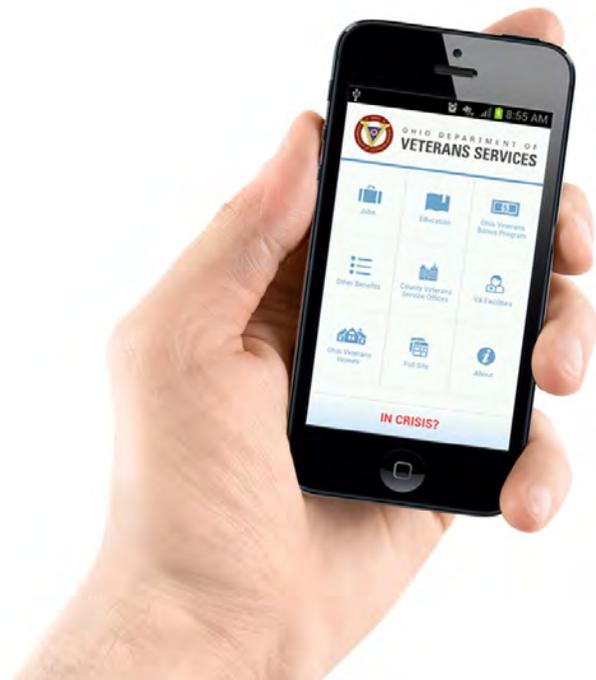
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These resources are added under both existing and new navigational buttons on the app's home screen. Specifically, the app –

- Under the current Jobs button, adds an Ohio One Stop Centers (for Ohio Means Jobs) search page that enables the office locations to be found by current location, zip code or county, and provides contact, map and directional information.
- Also under the Jobs button, adds a list of Small Business Development Centers by city for veterans wishing to start their own business; the list also includes contact, map and directional information.
- Under the current Education button, adds a list of Student Vet Centers in Ohio Public Colleges and Universities that includes contact and directional information.
- Adds a button for the Ohio Department of Veterans Services Advisory Committee that contains contact information for the veterans' organizations and affiliated organizations that make up the committee.
- Adds a button that contains current news releases issued by the Ohio Department of Veterans Services.
- Under the existing About button, adds icons and links to the department's social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube).



The ODVS mobile app provides an overview of the principal federal and state benefits available to veterans and how to apply for them. The app enables a user to find each of Ohio's 88 county veteran service offices by current location, zip code or county. There is also contact, map and directional information for each office and for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities in the state. Currently, the app has over 6,500 users.

The app is available, at no cost, from the Windows, Google Play and iTunes stores, by searching the key words "Ohio veteran." The department's web site, www.ohiovet.gov, contains a link to the stores. The app is compatible with Windows, Android and iOS devices.



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Ohio State Parks Offering Veteran Discount...

Beginning July 1, veterans across Ohio are able to have some cheaper in-state getaways thanks to discounts in state park lodging announced by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).



Veterans and active duty military service members can receive a 10 percent discount for camping, getaway rentals, cottages and lodge rooms at any of the nine Ohio State Park lodges.

An even bigger discount will be available this fall. In honor of Veterans Day, ODNR will provide veterans and active duty military with a 20 percent discount off camping, getaway rentals, cottages and lodge rooms from Friday, Oct. 31, through Sunday, Nov. 16, 2014.

Both of these discounts may only be used for a single campsite, getaway rental unit, cottage or

lodge room per park visit. The discount will only be given to the veteran or active duty service member who uses the facility.

Military identification must be presented at the time of arrival or check-in to receive the discount. For additional details on state park discounts, see: <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/discounts>

Burn Pit Registry...

The VA is collecting info on service members who believe they experienced harmful environmental effects to their health from exposure to burn pits in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Currently, the VA says that research does not show evidence of long-term health problems from exposure to burn pits, in which a variety of waste from human to chemicals, petroleum and discarded food were burned. But it is also studying the issue and plans to continue doing so. To that end, the agency is seeking information from veterans who believe such exposure has compromised their health.

Veterans can also file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe were caused by exposure to burn pits. The claims will be decided on a case-by-case basis.



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According to the VA, veterans who were closer to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk. Health effects depend on a number of other factors, such as the kind of waste being burned and wind direction. Toxins in burn pit smoke may affect the skin, eyes, respiratory and cardiovascular systems, gastrointestinal tract and internal organs. Most of the irritation is temporary and resolves once the exposure is gone. This includes eye irritation and burning, coughing and throat irritation, breathing difficulties, and skin itching and rashes. The high level of fine dust and pollution common in Iraq and Afghanistan may pose a greater danger for respiratory illnesses than exposure to burn pits, the VA said.

The online registry and additional information are at:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/index.asp>



Chillicothe VA Celebrates 90 Years...

On July 9, 1924, what was then known as the Veterans Bureau dedicated Veterans Hospital No. 97 in Chillicothe. It housed only two dozen patients at its dedication, and was built on land belonging to Camp Sherman, where some of these patients may have trained before heading overseas to fight in World War I.



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The campus of the present-day Chillicothe VA Medical Center was extensive then, with 22 buildings constructed the year before the hospital to provide various services to area veterans, and it remains so today. The current facility consists of 72 buildings and employs more than 1,100 people and serves veterans in a large area of southeastern and south central Ohio. But the mission of this historic hospital has remained constant since its first days – to provide medical care to Ohioans who have honorably served the nation.



Happy 90th Birthday, Chillicothe VA! We hope you have many more than 90 birthdays yet to come.

Veterans Seeking Employment...



Veterans seeking employment in Ohio can benefit now from an increased hiring focus by both private and public employers. Every month in these pages, we bring you an update on hiring conditions statewide. Please read and share.

If you're in the job market, be sure to prepare a resume from the online resources available, see what's out there from both online and in-person sources, dress appropriately and actively get out and look.

In the meantime, we'll keep providing you the latest updates here, as well as giving you the latest on major regional hiring opportunities on our [Facebook](#) page, so be sure to "like" it.

Job Fair Info: Two job fairs are occurring in July in different parts of Ohio. The details are on the following page:



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- Congressman Jim Renacci is sponsoring a free Veterans Job Fair in Brunswick on Friday, July 18 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The fair takes place at the Brunswick High School East Gym, located at 3581 Center Rd in Brunswick, zip code 44212. The fair, sponsored by Congressman Jim Renacci, features over 25 local employers, including Home Depot, IFCO Systems, Kimble Manufacturing, Mack Industries, UPS and Westfield Insurance. For more information call the Congressman's Wadsworth office at 330-334-0040.
- The Disabled American Veterans and RecruitMilitary are hosting a free All Veterans Career Fair in Columbus on Thursday, July 24 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will be held at the Aladdin Shrine Event and Conference Center, 3850 Steltzer Rd in Columbus, zip code 43219. The employers seeking prospective employees include Chesapeake Oilfield Services, Lockheed Martin, PNC, Kroger, Worthington Industries, and Express Scripts. Advance registration is encouraged; see: <https://events.recruitmilitary.com/events/columbus-all-veterans-job-fair-july-24-2014>

Finding Jobs Online: Veterans 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. The site is at <https://ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/>, or simply type in "Ohiomeansjobs.com." The available jobs are posted in the "Job Seekers" area of this recently-upgraded site.



Be sure to register and post your resume on the site; just follow the "Veterans" Private Owen icon. Ohio Means Jobs automatically posts veterans' resumes first for any job that matches the qualifications they've stated in their resume – so employers who go to the site will see veterans' resumes before they see anyone else's. The resume should be reviewed every month and electronically "updated" – which is a simple key stroke, whether any additional information is added or not – to keep it refreshed and at the head of the line for jobs.

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This web site also has an area with other resources for veterans, to include translation of military to civilian skills and a resume rater. The link is below: <http://www.ohiomeansveteranjobs.com/>

Finding Jobs In-Person:

If you want to start a face-to-face job search, there's in-person assistance available throughout Ohio that knows where the local jobs are. 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 regionally around the state. Contact information can be found online at:

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/wiamap.stm>



The Ohio Means Jobs 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 – and they know where the jobs are locally. The Job Centers also have resources to assist disabled veterans with qualifying for, finding and keeping meaningful employment.

Companies Looking to Hire Veterans: More and more nationally known companies with Ohio operations are actively seeking veterans to hire for many different areas of their businesses. These companies include AEP, AT&T, Chase Bank, GE, General Motors, Home Depot, Huntington Bank, PNC Bank, Scotts Miracle Gro, Starbucks, Walmart, Whirlpool, Verizon, and Xerox. Information on current jobs is available on the individual company web sites; go to www.google.com to search by company name and then click on their “employment” or “careers” links, or check out the Ohio Means Jobs site.

Many large state employers, such as the Cleveland Clinic and local and regional hospitals and the Waterworks, are also in the market for qualified veterans. Again, check out the Ohio Means Jobs site or local in-person assistance (see above).



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The Ohio insurance industry has 26,000 new jobs to fill by 2020. These new jobs are in a number of different skill sets, and are available in insurance companies all around the state. For more information, see: <http://insurancecareers.org/veterans>

State agencies are also seeking to hire veterans. Open state jobs can be viewed and applied for at: <http://careers.ohio.gov/>

Local communities and counties often hire veterans for a variety of public service jobs. Search “employment” on the web sites of local government offices and agencies where you live.

For the most current information on jobs in a local area:

- the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services offices in each county, as well as regional Ohio Means Jobs Centers, can help; see “Finding Jobs In-Person” in this section.
- ***the Ohio Department of Veterans Services’ Facebook and Twitter pages will also post frequent announcements of multiple job openings across the state, so be sure to check them out at <http://dvs.ohio.gov/HOME>.***

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. For example, 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. Veteran-specific information on higher education is available through the Ohio Board of Regents at: <https://www.ohiohighered.org/veterans>

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.





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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 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>

The Air Force education site is at:

<http://www.mcinfoex.net/?q=air-force/community-college-air-force-ccaf-credentialing-programs-flight>

Iraq War Veterans, the Ohio Veterans Bonus Ends This Year For You...



Iraq War veterans, take heed – the application deadline for the Ohio Veterans Bonus for veterans who served boots-on-the-ground in Iraq is Dec. 31, 2014.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is available to veterans who served anywhere in the world during the time of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Service must have been for more than 90 days active duty, not for training. Eligible veterans must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into the service, and must be Ohio residents currently.



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December 31, 2014 is the deadline to apply for those who served in the country of Iraq. The Bonus remains open for veterans who served in the country of Afghanistan or elsewhere in the world since Oct. 7, 2001.

The Bonus pays \$100 a month to veterans who served 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. The maximum individual award for all eligible periods of service is \$1,500.

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.

Specific eligibility periods and deadlines are below:

- For service in Iraq: eligible period is from March 19, 2003 to Dec. 31, 2011 (**deadline to apply is Dec. 31, 2014**); and
- For service in Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world: eligible period is, from Oct. 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President.

Anyone needing more information or who want to request an application 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.



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We Celebrate Our Independence...

The Fourth of July marks Independence Day for the United States of America, the anniversary of the signing of our Declaration of Independence from Great Britain during the midst of the American Revolutionary War. It is a day that our second President and one of our Founders, John Adams, declared in a letter to his wife Abigail, "...ought to be celebrated by pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other..."

Certainly, across Ohio and all around our nation, we celebrated the Fourth with lots of noise, hot dogs and fireworks as we gathered together with family and friends. But this 238th year of our independence is also a time for reflection.

The freedom that we so boldly declared on July 4, 1776 was not won until the war ended seven years later, thanks to the blood and sacrifice of those willing to put everything on the line to secure that freedom. Since then, we're fortunate to have maintained our freedom thanks to the blood, sacrifice and vigilance of generations of men and women in the Armed Forces.

But this freedom has also been maintained thanks to the hard work, sacrifice and at times also the blood of the men and women in our government who strive to make our laws and represent our will; of the police, fire and safety forces who protect and serve us each day; and of the ordinary citizens who work, raise their families and themselves often sacrifice to make a positive difference in the lives of others. We all do our parts.

While there will always be things that divide us, there is far more that unites us. The Fourth of July is a day for all of us, no matter our individual beliefs, to take pride in that which binds us all together – we are Americans. And that's definitely worth a great deal of noise, hot dogs and **fireworks!**

