Title: Veteran’s Services Advisory Board

From: Veteran’s Agent

Subject: Meeting Minutes

1. The forty-first meeting of the Veteran’s Services Advisory Board (VSAB) was called to order at 6:00 p.m., 18 Feb 2016, in the VSA office area.

2. Members in attendance were:
   Mr. Ray Janke
   Mr. Vincent Viglione
   Selectman Archie Archible
   Mr. Anthony McAvoy
   Mr. Bill McClure
   Ms. Jan Jourdain

Members Absent were:
Mr. Gerry Desilets
Mr. Edward Dice
Mr. Bill Bowen
Mr. Larry Raines

3. Old Business:
   a. The ESGR request is still being worked by the Board of Selectmen. (OPEN)
   b. Appointment papers for new American Legion Commander, Anthony McAvoy, are still being worked. (OPEN)
   c. The past Veteran’s Days activities were reviewed. (CLOSED)
   d. Flagging of the Towns Cemeteries on Veteran’s Day was reviewed (CLOSED)

4. New Business:
   a. The committee reviewed plans for the upcoming Memorial Day activities. We still need a speaker and clergy coverage. There was also a discussion about Police support for the small parade. (OPEN)
   b. Flagging dates are still to be determined. (OPEN).

5. Public Input/Concerns/Comments:
   a. None.

6. Good of the VSAB:
   a. Mr. Janke briefed on the following attachments:
      - IRS scam alert
      - Wounded Warrior Project Issues
      - VA claims system
      - Free Tax Service
      - DOD Sesame workshop website
      - Free learning Veteran’s website
7. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m. All documents that were provided during the meeting will be attached to the original minutes on file in the Town Clerk’s office. The next meeting will be held on 17 March 2016.

Vincent Viglione
VSAB Recording Secretary

Approved

Ray Janke
Veteran’s Service Agent
Co-Chairperson

Cc: Town Clerk
    Town Administrator
    Board of Selectman
    Committee members
Veterans’ Services Advisory Board Meeting Notice

Meeting Date: 2-18-2016
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Adjacent to Veterans’ Agents Office

Agenda:

#1 Old Business

#1a VSAB Statement of Support for ESGR Program update

#1b Appointment paperwork for Anthony McAvoy update

#1c Review/input on Veteran Day ceremonies

#2 New business

#2a Memorial Day planning/coordination 2016

#2b Memorial Day press release review

#3 Public input/concerns

#4 Good of the VSAB
Memorial Day

Preparation

1. February: Arrange/invite guest speaker.

2. April:
   1. Order 4 new wreaths for the monuments; flag pole (WWI/WWII/Korea),
      Grand Union, Viet Nam, and Middle East.
   2. Procure new flags from Sentry Uniform (paid for by Vet Council funds);
      1. 8x12 all-weather Stars & Stripes and 5x8 dbl-sided POW/MIA
         for flagpole on the common.
      2. 5x8 all-weather Stars & Stripes and a 3x5 double-sided:
         POW/MIA & Gold Star/Blue Star Family flag for Town Hall pole.
      3. At South Cemetery: a 5x8 all-weather Stars & Stripes, 3x5 of
         the following flags- US Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine
         Corps, Navy, Merchant Marine, and POW/MIA.
   4. At Lake Vale: a 4x6 all-weather Stars & Stripes.

3. Early May:
   1. Send invitations to: school bands, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts/Brownies,
      Selectmen, Fire, EMS, and elected officials.
   2. Notify B'town police of parade route and required traffic enforcement.
   3. Notify B'town DPW re: events for grounds keeping and decorations.
   4. Coordinate with Graves Officer to flag veterans’ graves.
   5. Arrange for Color Guard/firing squad from Am Legion, VFW, and DAV.
   6. Send request letter to each place of worship in town, for a special
      acknowledgement in their service the Sunday before Memorial Day,
      for the Veterans who died for our country.

4. Three weeks prior: Have either the Commander Co-Chair of the VSAB or
   the Veterans’ Agent write/submit an article of the Memorial Day planned
   activities to the Sentinel, Hampshire Gazette, Republican newspapers; and
   Belchertown-news.com inviting all to participate and to gather for the parade
   at 9:30am in the parking lot of the Town Hall. (Have gold star parents contact
   my office if they wish to participate in the ceremony) Confirm Invitations and
   offers to speak for the State and Federal representatives associated with our
   town, district, and/or state. Distribute this article to the Selectmen’s office for
   a Channel 5 update and to send out notices of the ceremony to the
   appropriate town departments. Also have all groups email the parade
   coordinator at: rjanke@belchertown.org so the parade lineup can be worked out.
5. **Day before parade/ceremony:**
   1. Replace old flags with new ones purchased from Sentry Uniform (Friday before).
   2. Replace wreaths with new place on stands and store in gazebo.
   3. Stage PA system components in gazebo.

**On Memorial Day**

1. **Early morning:**
   1. Lower Town Common, Town Hall flags, and all the flags at South Cemetery to 1/2 staff.
   2. Position podium, wreaths in front of gazebo.
   3. Prep/position PA system.
   4. Have seats for the gold star parents, politicians, and speaker.
   5. Bouquet(s) of flowers for gold star mom's staged.

2. **At 8:30 am:**
   1. A salute to the fallen at South cemetery (color guard + firing squad)

3. **At 9:30 am:**
   1. Gather at the Town Hall
   2. Arrange for wreath placers (two for each wreath) with local Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.
   3. Get the names of buglers from band and designate the positions where each bugler should stand.

4. **9:55am:** Form up parade in street.

5. **10:00am:** Parade steps off. Proceeds up Main, around common down Park Street, onto the center of the common in positions around the gazebo and monuments for the ceremony. (Firing squad, salute, taps...)

**Note:** Have the DPW raise the flags at various Town locations after the Memorial Day ceremonies.
DPW Memorial Day Preparations:

Prior to Memorial Day parade/ceremony:

- Replace old flags with new ones purchased from Sentry Uniform.

On Memorial Day:

1. Early morning:

- Lower Town Common, Town Hall flags, and all the flags at South Cemetery to 1/2 staff.
- Isolate/reserve six parking spaces for the attending elected officials at the Town Hall parking lot.

2. After Memorial Day Ceremony

- Please have the DPW raise the flags at various Town locations after the Memorial Day ceremonies.
BELCHERTOWN MEMORIAL DAY PARADE AND CEREMONY
30 May 2015

Order of events

10:00 am Parade steps off and proceeds to the common

Mr. Poulin: Welcome, statement of purpose

Invocation: Reverend XXX XXXX

Welcome: Chairman of the Belchertown Board of Selectman

Pledge of Allegiance

Music selection: Jabish Brook Middle School

Salute to Fallen Comrades:

  Presentation of memorial wreaths and reading of KIA names

  Firing Detail fires three volleys

  Taps

National Anthem: Belchertown High School Band

  Raising of the U.S. Flag during National Anthem

Politicians’ Comments: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Flanders Fields- “Donald Slessler, retired XXX XXX” ???

Keynote Speaker: XXX XXXX, veteran US XXXX

Musical Selection: Belchertown High School Band

Benediction: Reverend XXX XXXX

Adjourn
***Press Advisory***

2016 Belchertown Memorial Day Events

Ray Janke, the Belchertown Veterans’ Agent, announces the annual Memorial Day events set for this year’s Memorial Day weekend beginning Saturday May 28.

Please come out and participate in one or more of the planned Memorial Day events to remember and honor our nation’s men and women who fell in battle. Gold Star parents planning to attend Monday’s parade and ceremony should contact Mr. Janke at 323-0409.

The following Memorial Day events are planned for May 28, 29, and 30:

- **Saturday, May 28:** The American Legion will sell poppies at local Belchertown businesses 8:00 am to 12:00 noon.

- **Sunday, May 29:** Belchertown Veterans Council, in conjunction with the Friends of the Quabbin and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, invites everyone to attend the traditional memorial services at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Please begin gathering at 10:30 am for the 11:00 am ceremony.

- **Monday, May 30:** 8:30 – 8:45 am South Cemetery, a salute to the veterans interred at Belchertown’s South cemetery. Everyone is invited.

- **Monday, May 30:** People marching in the Belchertown Memorial Day Parade are asked to gather at the Town Hall starting at 9:30 am. The parade will step off at 10:00 am beginning at the town hall and ending at the town common, followed by a ceremony. The guest speaker will be XXX XXXX, veteran U.S. XXXX. Organizations and individuals that would like to march in the parade must contact parade coordinator Ray Janke at: rjanke@belchertown.org or call 323-0409 before Friday, May 27.

- Anyone wishing to retire old flags may drop them off at the VFW, the Selectmen’s office, and/or the Veterans’ Agent office.
Beware of IRS Impersonators

Week of February 03, 2016

As tax-filing season begins, veterans should be aware of people contacting them who claim to be from the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury. These IRS tax impersonators have been using phone calls and emails to take millions of dollars from taxpayers in every state. The callers tell intended victims they owe taxes and must pay using a pre-paid debit card, money order or a wire transfer. If you owe Federal taxes, or think you might owe taxes, hang up and call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help you with your payment questions. If you do not owe taxes, fill out the "IRS Impersonation scam" form on TIGTA website or call TIGTA at 800-366-4484. For more information, read the VA VAntage Point Blog.

For more guides and tips for service members and military families for tax season, visit the Military.com Tax Center.

RELATED TOPICS Military Taxes
Wounded Warrior Project accused of wasting donation

A CBS News investigation into a charity for wounded veterans, the Wounded Warrior Project, looks into how the charity spends its donation money. What caught our attention is how the Wounded Warrior Project spends donations compared to other long-respected charities.

For example, Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust spends 96 percent of its budget on vets. Fisher House devotes 91 percent. But according to public records reported by "Charity Navigator," the Wounded Warrior Project spends 60 percent on vets.

Where is the money going?

In its commercials, Wounded Warrior Project appeals to the American public's generosity, and it works. In 2014 alone the group received more than $300 million in donations.

Army Staff Sergeant Erick Millette
CBS NEWS
"Their mission is to honor and empower wounded warriors, but what the public doesn't see is how they spend their money," said Army Staff Sergeant Erick Millette.

Millette came home from Iraq in 2006 with a bronze star and a purple heart -- along with a traumatic brain injury and PTSD.

Initially, he admired the charity's work, and participated in its programs. He took a job as a public speaker with Wounded Warrior Project in 2013. But after two years, he quit.

"You're using our injuries, our darkest days, our hardships, to make money. So you can have these big parties," he told CBS News.

Millette said he witnessed lavish spending on staff.

"Let's get a Mexican mariachi band in there, let's get maracas made with [the] WWP logo, put them on every staff member's desk. Let's get it catered and have a big old party," he described.

"Going to a nice fancy restaurant is not team building. Staying at a lavish hotel at the beach here in Jacksonville, and requiring staff that lives in the area to stay at the hotel is not team building," Millette continued.

CBS News spoke to more than 40 former employees who described a charity where spending was out of control.
Two of those former employees were so fearful of retaliation they asked that their faces not to be shown on camera. "It was extremely extravagant. Dinners and alcohol, and just total accessm" one employee explained. He continued, saying that for a charitable organization that's serving veterans, the spending on resorts and alcohol is "what the military calls fraud waste and abuse."

Wounded Warrior Project CEO Steven Nardizzi
According to the charity's tax forms, spending on conferences and meetings went from $1.7 million in 2010, to $26 million in 2014. That's about the same amount the group spends on combat stress recovery -- its top program.
Formor employees say spending has skyrocketed since Steven Nardizzi took over as CEO in 2009. Many point to the 2014 annual meeting at a luxury resort in Colorado Springs as typical of his style. "He rappelled down the side of a building at one of the all hands events. He's come in on a Segway, he's come in on a horse."
About 500 staff members attended the four-day conference in Colorado. The price tag? About $3 million.
"Donors don't want you to have a $2,500 bar tab. Donors don't want you to fly every staff member once a year to some five-star resort and whoop it up and call it team building," said Millette.

A Colorado Springs resort where a 2014 WWP conference was held
Wounded Warrior Project declined CBS News' repeated interview requests for Nardizzi, but offered their Director of Alumni and a recipient of their services, Captain Ryan Kules.
Kules denied there was excessive spending on conferences.
"It's the best use of donor dollars to ensure we are providing programs and services to our warriors and families at the highest quality."
When asked why conferences were held at five-star resorts instead of cheaper options, Kules provided the same answer.

Capt. Ryan Kules, WWP Director of Alumni
CBS NEWS
"Like I said, it's to make sure we are aligned and can build as a team. Be able to be able to provide the best quality services."
"WWP and those donor dollars trained me to speak and be a voice, and that's exactly what I'm doing," said Millette.
"I'm sorry, but I'll be damned if you're gonna take hard-working Americans' money and drink it and waste it."
Kules also told CBS News the charity did not spend $3 million on the Colorado conference, but he was not there and was unable to say what it did cost. He also denied that the charity spends money on alcohol or engages in any other kind of excessive spending.
Part two of this investigation will air on "CBS This Morning," Wednesday at 7 a.m. ET.
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Ex-employee: Wounded Warrior Project conduct "makes me sick"

Wounded Warrior Project is the nation's most recognizable veteran's charity. The organization has invested heavily in fundraising and says this philosophy best positions it to carry out its stated mission: to honor and empower wounded warriors.

Former Wounded Warrior employees accuse charity of wasting millions

Many service members have said WWP's programs have positively impacted their lives, but now, former employees of the charity are speaking out about their concern that it is straying from its mission. In Part 2 of a CBS News investigation, former employees spoke about programs they said fall short.

Their commercials are easy to recognize and hard to miss. The charity's heavy investment in fundraising has paid off: bringing in more than $300 million in donations in 2014.

Wounded Warrior Project accused of wasting donation money

Retired Army Staff Sgt. Erick Millette came home from Iraq in 2006 with a Bronze star and a Purple Heart -- along with a traumatic brain injury and PTSD.

Wounded Warrior Project enrolled him in its program Warriors Speak, which "provides important life skills that help warriors succeed." In 2013, the charity hired him as a public speaker.

But Millette quit last year. He told CBS News correspondent Chip Reid that Warriors Speak is less like a program to help veterans and more like a fundraising vehicle.

"They will tell you it's not. But it is," Millette said. "I began to see how an organization that rakes in hundreds of millions of dollars a year is not helping my brothers and my sisters. Or at least not all of them."

CBS News has interviewed more than three dozen former employees of the Wounded Warrior Project and nearly all of them told us they're concerned that the organization has become more focused on raising money than on serving wounded veterans.

Many of those former staffers believe that after raising more than a billion dollars since 2003, the charity should be providing more comprehensive services to wounded veterans.

"I think they want to show warriors a good time. I think they get these warriors to events, but where's the follow up?" one former employee said.

Two former employees who spoke to CBS News didn't want to show their faces, fearing retaliation.

"A lot of the warriors I saw needed mental health treatment. They don't get that from Wounded Warrior Project," one of the employees said.

"What happens when you make a suggestion that there's a better way to serve veterans?" Reid asked.

"If you use your brain and come up with an idea, within a matter of time, you're 'off the bus,'" the other employee said.

"They don't need you. It's their way or the highway," he added.

"I would raise issues. Why aren't we doing follow up? Why don't we have any case management?" Millette said.

"How would they respond?" Reid asked.

"We don't call warriors. Warriors call us," Millette recalled. "Again, as a disabled veteran, it just makes me sick."

The organization declined our repeated requests to interview Wounded Warrior Project CEO Steven Nardizzi, but the charity offered us Capt. Ryan Kules, a recipient of its programs and services and its director of alumni.

"Wounded Warrior Project contacts alumni and family support members multiple times over the course of the year, we call each and every one of our alumni and family support members on their birth month to be able to ensure and check in, see how they're doing, and see if they need other programs and services," Kules said. "And then also have multiple opportunities for them, and us to follow up and see how they are doing."

Marc Owens is a former director of tax-exempt organizations at the IRS.
"What was your biggest concern in reading these forms?" Reid asked him, showing him the WWP tax forms.

"That I couldn't tell the number of people that were assisted," Owens said. "I thought that was truly unusual."

"They do put some of those numbers on the website," Reid pointed out.

"Yes, they do," Owens responded.

But what's the difference?

"Form 990 is signed under the penalties of perjury," Owens said.

"You have to be careful on there," Reid said.

"That's right, you have to be certain," Owens said.

Millette said he expects retaliation from Wounded Warrior Project, but said that won't stop him.

"As a disabled veteran, I feel that other veterans need a voice. I am in a position where I can be their voice," he said. "And I feel if I don't stand up and do what I feel is right, and voice their concerns, what I've heard, and how I feel, then I'm leaving them behind."

Capt. Kules, Wounded Warrior Project's representative, told CBS News that mental health services are important to the charity, and that it is committing $100 million over three years to a warrior care network in a partnership with four hospitals nationwide that will provide outpatient mental health services to post-9/11 veterans.

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-Chip Reid-
VA E Claims System Melts Backlog but Costs Alarm Congress

Jan 28, 2016 | by Tom Philpott

Over the past five years, since Republicans won back control of the House, the Department of Veteran Affairs has been flogged publicly many times, often for allowing a mountain of backlogged disability compensation claims.

As the backlog fell, lawmakers now are learning, they should have paid more attention to how much VA was spending on its primary tool for the task -- a paperless claim system. They're paying attention now.

The cost of VA's electronic claims network, called the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), is $1 billion so far and soon will reach $1.3 billion, VA conceded last week to the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

That's more than double VA's original estimate of $580 million for VBMS in 2009. Costs are continuing to grow too because, by design, VBMS gets a software upgrade every three months. And apart from quarterly upgrades, VA plans for major innovations to the VBMS starting in 2018.

Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) said he called last week's to focus on "yet another VA project that is over budget and underachieving."

Amid the waves of criticism that followed, including testimony on results of troublesome audits by VA's Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office, doubts surfaced as to what impact the VBMS alone might have had on the backlog melt.

A VA claim is said to be in backlog status if awaiting a decision beyond 125 days of being filed. The size of the backlog peaked in March 2013 at 611,000. It stands today between 75,000 and 80,000, said Beth McCoy, VA's deputy under secretary for field operations. She credited the decline in large part to the increasing effectiveness of the VBMS.

Miller complained that the backlog wasn't eliminated by 2015 as VA had vowed it would be. And both Miller and Brent Arronte, deputy assistant inspector general for VA audits and evaluations, questioned how much credit VBMS deserves for the backlog's sharp decline.

Miller noted that the Veterans Benefits Administration also had hired 7300 more fulltime employees from 2007 to 2014. Arronte said VBA spent a combined $255 million on mandatory overtime to work the backlog, and VA implemented a fully developed claims process to shorten processing times.

Whatever VBMS contributed to the backlog's decline, Arronte said, its costs "continue to spiral upward and final end state costs remain unknown." Consequently, VA cannot be sure if its paperless claims system is providing "an effective return on its investment," he said.

Cost overruns, Miller said, "would be bad enough but, after six years in development, VBMS is still not able to fully support disability claims and pension applications." And for claim decisions on appeal, he said,
VBMS "only acts as a document repository." So even as the backlog of original claims has fallen, Miller said, the number of claims awaiting appeal decisions jumped 70 percent the past three years to 433,000.

In VA's defense, McCoy and Dawn Bontempo, director of Veterans Benefits Management System Program Management Office, suggested lawmakers are wrong to label VBMS spending increases as cost overruns.

"Scope and cost increases were planned, essential and approved to move beyond just an initial electronic repository functionality," McCoy said.

To better serve veterans as well as veteran service organizations and VA claim processors, VA steadily is increasing "automation functionality," McCoy said. "That's something we will probably never finish."

The VBMS, added Bontempo, was never meant to be a project where all requirements are defined upfront, a system is built to meet them, and "years later you have something delivered that may not be meeting your user needs. That's a traditional IT project; we did not go down that path."

The VBMS design, she said, "allowed us to build requirements as we were going along." So the system has benefited from "seventeen major software releases and 55 minor releases in just four years," McCoy said.

As VBMS tools and processes improve, as more files are scanned into the system, VA can better serve veterans seeking compensation, she said.

However, recent audits and feedback from VBMS users suggest a system plagued by weaknesses and defects. Though 95 percent of records related to veterans' disability claims are now electronic and reside in VBMS, the system still can't fully support disability and pension claims, GAO said.

Many of the software releases touted by VA, it added, contained defects "that reduce system functionality" and "adversely affect users' ability to process disability claims in an efficient manner."

The American Legion, in a written statement to the committee, complained that its claim assistance officers and the veterans they help are frustrated often by improperly identified scanned documents and VBMS' lack of file search capabilities. As a result, the VBMS "offers little to no improvement over manually searching through paper files, with perhaps additional eye strain from staring at monitors," the Legion advised.

GAO reported that VA "has not yet produced a plan that identifies when the system will be completed" or a reliable estimate of cost to complete. That limited view for managers and other stakeholders risks the VBMS "not having sufficient funding to complete development," GAO said.

Also, while VA hasn't conducted a customer satisfaction survey, GAO's own survey found a majority of users satisfied, but claim decision review officers "were considerably less satisfied."

Miller tried to make the case that paperless claims were resulting in decisions of lesser quality, which accounted for a ballooning of claims on appeal. McCoy disputed that, arguing that overall claim accuracy scores had climbed from 33 percent in 2011 to 91 percent last year.
"Veterans are much better off because of the electronic system," McCoy said. "We were outdated [and] should have done this years ago."

Miller said VA still must be held to account for unbridled spending.

"It can't be pouring in more and more and more money without any cost controls. I think that's what the committee needs to focus on," he said.
Free and Discounted Tax Preparation for Military

By Heather Sweeney

Tax season is here again. And while filing for tax returns can be tricky for the average family, it can get even more complicated for military families.

Thankfully, military personnel and their families have access to a variety of tax preparation and filing services for free. Whether you choose to file taxes yourself online or you prefer some outside assistance from a trained professional, there are a variety of free options to choose from.

MILITARY INSTALLATION TAX CENTERS

Most large military installations worldwide offer service members and their families' free income tax filing assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which is sponsored by the IRS. VITA sites have volunteers that are trained by the IRS to provide assistance with some of the more complicated military-specific tax issues, such as combat zone tax benefits.

Click here to contact your local installation for more information about location of tax centers, hours of operation, scheduling appointments, and necessary documentation.

OFF-BASE SERVICES

Liberty Tax Service is also offering Military.com members a new customer discount of $50 off income tax preparation. Click here to print out the coupon and take it to participating Liberty offices with a valid military ID.

ONLINE TAX PREPARATION

Military OneSource provides free tax preparation and filing services and tax consultations for military families. This service allows military members to complete and electronically file federal and up to 3 state tax returns. This is available for active duty service members, National Guard and Reserve, and spouses. Service members who retired and discharged honorably are eligible until 180 days past their retirement date, end of tour of service or discharge date. You must create a free account with Military OneSource to use this service.

Jackson Hewitt is offering a 25% discount on your online Federal and State tax return preparation.
IRS Free File is a program available to taxpayers who's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is $62,000 or less. This program helps you find a Free File company that's best for you out of the numerous companies that participate and offers fillable forms when preparing your own tax returns. Free file opens January 15, 2016.

TaxSlayer has a Military Edition for active duty service members to prepare federal and state returns online for 50% off.

TurboTax offers discounts on its software that's customized for members of the military. Service members with pay grades of E1-E5 can get the software for free, while pay grades of E6 through all officer pay grades can get the software at a discounted price.

NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

Filing your taxes requires a lot of documents and personal information so make sure to collect everything you'll need before you get started. The following is a list of some of those necessary records, but if you're getting outside help, it's best to call ahead to make sure you're not forgetting anything.

- Photo ID/Military ID
- Social security cards for you and each family member claimed on the return
- Wage and earning statement(s), such as Forms W-2, W-2G, and 1099-R
- Child care costs
- Investment income forms
- Receipts for charitable donations
- Receipts for deductible expenses
- Your bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit
- Last year's returns

W-2 forms are usually available for military members by the end of January and can be downloaded from MyPay website.
Sesame Street Launches Website

Week of February 15, 2016

The Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street, recently launched a website devoted to helping families cope with the changes associated with transitioning into civilian life. Sesame Workshop contains resources that military parents can use to help their families communicate through the transition process. The Department of Defense (DoD) has worked with the Sesame Workshop in the past to use Sesame Street's familiar characters to help preschool-aged military children understand aspects of military life such as the deployment of a parent or moving to a new home. Previous examples of these resources can be found through Military OneSource.

For more entertainment-related military news and events, visit the Military.com Off-duty section.

RELATED TOPICS Family and Spouse Off Duty
Free Learning Courses for Veterans

Week of February 15, 2016

LinkedIn is now offering service members and veterans one year of access to its professional development site, Lynda.com, at no cost. This online learning company offers thousands of on-demand courses for users to build their business, software, technology, creative and other skills. LinkedIn also allows job seekers to create a public Veterans Employment Center (VEC) profile. The VEC connects transitioning service members, veterans and their families with employers that have made a commitment to hire them. To create a VEC profile, visit the Veterans Employment Center webpage and selecting 'job seekers.' For more information, visit the LinkedIn Veterans webpage at veterans.linkedin.com.

For more veteran job news, listings and resources, visit the Military.com Veteran Jobs Center.

RELATED TOPICS Veteran Jobs