



# WORKFORCE SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF VETERANS

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ISSUE 9-2

## *Did you know???*

As I get out and meet people within Department of Labor and Industry (Workforce Services Division), and all the Veteran Service Provider organizations around the state, I continue to be amazed at the level of caring and commitment exhibited to and for our Veterans. But really, amazed or surprised does not accurately reflect my feelings. Do you ever just feel good about what you witness people doing not because it's their job, or what they are paid to do; but because it is the right thing to do? That probably better describes my first eight months in this job. I am seeing people at their best; making decisions, choices, and efforts voluntarily to benefit others.

Our roles, however, are not limited to providing services. Nor should they be. One of the best services we can provide is not really a service at all. Our ability to instill confidence, a sense of worth, and empowering people to take charge of their lives and destiny (rather than enabling dependence) is one of the best and most powerful impact opportunities we may have in our arsenal for today's Veterans. Most of us will have one opportunity (maybe more) to have just such an impact in a Veteran's life. Don't pass it up.

And as winter rolls into spring, please remember to observe another "holiday" in memory of our fallen Veterans. There is a short article on page 3 of this newsletter in recognition of this Memorial Day. To all Veterans, thank you for your service to this nation; and for all who continue to provide support to our Veterans in so many ways, I thank you.

Brad Nelson  
Veterans Program Manager  
Montana Department of Labor

**DVOP**—Disabled Veteran Outreach Program. This term is sometimes mis-used in identifying an individual, rather than a program. The DVOP specialist's role is to facilitate intensive services to Veterans with special employment and training needs (barriers to employment). These services include conduct an assessment; develop and document a plan of action; provide career guidance; coordinate supportive services; establish contacts with local businesses; provide referrals to training and job vacancies and conduct outreach activities.

**LVER**—Local Veterans Employment Representative (Program). Unlike the acronym "DVOP", LVER actually does refer to an individual. The LVER specialist works with other service providers to promote Veterans as job seekers who have highly marketable skills and experience. They advocate for Veterans for employment and training opportunities with business, industry and community based organizations by participating in a variety of outreach activities such as career fairs, coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and business organizations. They establish and maintain regular contact with employers; conduct training for Workforce Services staff on Veterans programs and issues, and plan and facilitate the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).

**DD Form 214**— This form is without a doubt one of the most important military documents service members will receive during their

military career. Safeguarding of this document is critical, and there are several options on how. The long-held instruction was to register the document with your local county courthouse. Although frowned upon now due to identity theft concerns, it is still an option. Almost all components of the military now have some type of automated electronic record keeping systems. At a minimum, however, each service member should maintain a copy of their own in a safe, secure place that is accessible to them, their spouse or family member. Also see the article on page 4 about replacing military records.

If you aren't familiar with (and using) "Veterans Upward Bound" (VUB) of Montana as a resource you may be missing out. Besides offering free college prep classes at several campuses around the state, they have information on many other service providers, organizations and programs specifically for Veterans. They also publish an extremely informative monthly newsletter. Check out their website at:

<http://vubmt.com>

Select Newsletter on the top-line menu, then;  
Select whatever month's newsletter you prefer.

Tell Veterans about  
[www.vetsuccess.gov](http://www.vetsuccess.gov)  
[www.vetbiz.gov](http://www.vetbiz.gov)  
[www.jofdav.com](http://www.jofdav.com)  
[www.vetjobcebtal.com](http://www.vetjobcebtal.com)  
[www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)  
[www.trooptube.tv/home](http://www.trooptube.tv/home)

## NATIONAL NEWS

### National Resource Directory

The **National Resource Directory** is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. They provide wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans, their families, families of the fallen and those who support them with a web-based directory of valuable resources.

The directory is organized into six major categories: Benefits and Compensation; Education, Training and Employment; Family and Caregiver Support; Health; Housing and Transportation; and Services and Resources.

It delivers information on, and access to the full range of medical and non-medical services and resources needed to achieve their personal and professional goals across the transitions from recovery to rehabilitation to community reintegration.

This online partnership links to the services and resources of federal, state and local governmental agencies; Veterans service and benefit organizations; non-profit community-based and faith-based organizations; and academic institutions, professional associations and philanthropic organizations.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org>

### Returning OEF and OIF Service Members

The Department of Veterans Affairs has a specific website for service members returning from Operation

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov>

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### Troops to Teachers

*Provided by Le Gaub, Program Manager for TTT*

Troops to teachers is a U.S. Department of Defense program that helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed.

The Lewis and Clark Troops to Teachers regional office (located in Bozeman, MT (just off of the MSU campus)) helps qualified military personnel in making the transition from the armed services to service in public school classrooms by providing counseling and/or financial benefits in the six-state region (Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming).

The purpose of the Troops to Teachers program is to assist Veterans and current military members in making the transition to public school teaching. We do this by providing financial aid (\$5,000 stipend and/or \$10,000 bonus) and by providing information and advice on how to make the career transition.

The Troops to Teachers program has placed over 11,600 teachers in America's public classrooms since 1994. We are helping Veterans with another career, and at the same time we are helping America's youth, schools, families and society.

It is a common misperception that Troops to Teachers clients must have college degrees. This is not true. Individuals with vocational skills must be able to document that they possess these skills (such as electronics, carpentry, plumbing, automobile mechanics, computers, and other related areas) by providing records of work experiences or licenses.

Lewis and Clark Troops to teachers recently launched a plan called the Rural Recruiting Initiative. This is an attempt to bring together the resources of various government and other agencies to assist rural schools in recruiting teachers.

You can find a current listing of teacher vacancies and more information at:

<http://www.montana.edu/ttt>

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### Veterans and Mesothelioma

*From an article at asbestos.com*

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are currently 25 million living individuals who have served in the United States' armed forces.

Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of these living veterans were exposed to toxic asbestos-containing materials during military service.

Widely used by every military branch, asbestos was highly regarded for its heat resistance and fireproofing capabilities. In fact, asbestos was so valued that the military even mandated widespread usage before eventually phasing out the material in the 1970s.

Most military divisions utilized the caustic substance mainly for insulation purposes, but more than 300 products containing asbestos were used by the military, primarily by the Navy from the 1930s through the 1970s. Every ship and shipyard built by the Navy

*Mesothelioma cont'd on page 6*



**Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service.**

There are many stories as to its actual beginnings, with over two dozen cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day. There is also evidence that organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War. A hymn published in 1867, "Kneel Where Our Loves are Sleeping" by Nella L. Sweet carried the dedication "To The Ladies of the South who are Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead" (Source: Duke University's [Historic American Sheet Music, 1850-1920](#)). While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. It is more likely that it had many separate beginnings. Each of those



General John A. Logan

towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering of people to honor the war dead in the 1860's tapped into the general human need to honor our dead; each contributing honorably to the growing movement that culminated in General Logan giving his official proclamation in 1868. It is not important who was the very first. What is important is that Memorial Day was established. Memorial Day is not about division. It is about reconciliation. It is about coming together to honor those who gave their all.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his [General Order No. 11](#). It was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I, when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war. It is now celebrated in almost every State on the last Monday in May. Congress made it official with the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 - 363) to ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays, though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas, April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "[In Flanders Fields](#)," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

We cherish too, the Poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led,  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies.

She then conceived of an idea to wear red poppies on Memorial day in honor of those who died serving the nation during war. She was the first to wear one, and sold poppies to her friends and co-workers, with the money going to benefit servicemen in need. Later a Madam Guerin from France was visiting the United States and learned of this new custom started by Ms. Michael. When she returned to France, made artificial red poppies to raise money for war orphaned children and widowed women. This tradition spread to other countries. In 1921, the Franco-American Children's League sold poppies nationally to benefit war orphans of France and Belgium. The League disbanded a year later and Madam Guerin approached the VFW for help. Shortly before Memorial Day in 1922 the VFW became the first veterans' organization to nationally sell poppies. Two years later their "[Buddy Poppy program](#)" was selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans. In 1948 the US Post Office honored Ms Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing [a red 3 cent postage stamp](#) with her likeness on it.

Traditional observance of Memorial day has diminished over the years. Many Americans nowadays have forgotten the meaning and traditions of Memorial Day. At many cemeteries, the graves of the fallen are increasingly ignored and neglected.

*Memorial Day cont'd on page 4*

### Memorial Day cont'd from page 3

Most people no longer remember the proper flag etiquette for the day. While there are towns and cities that still hold Memorial Day parades, many have not held a parade in decades. Some people think the day is for honoring any and all dead, and not just those fallen in service to our country.

There are a few notable exceptions. Since the late 1950's, on the Thursday before Memorial Day, the 1,200 soldiers of the 3d U.S. Infantry place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure that each flag remains standing. In 1951, the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts of St. Louis began placing flags on the 150,000 graves at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery as an annual Good Turn, a practice that continues to this day. More recently, beginning in 1998, on the Saturday before the observed day for Memorial Day, the Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts place a candle at each of approximately 15,300 grave sites of soldiers buried at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park on Marye's Heights (the [Luminaria Program](#)). And in 2004, Washington D.C. held its first Memorial Day parade in over 60 years.

To help re-educate and remind Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day, the "[National Moment of Remembrance](#)" resolution was passed on Dec 2000 which asks that at 3 p.m. local time, for all Americans "To voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to [Taps](#)."

The Moment of Remembrance is a step in the right direction to returning the meaning back to the day. What is needed is a full return to the original day of observance. Set aside one day out of the year for the nation to get together to remember, reflect and honor those who have given their all in service to their country.

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## MILITARY RECORDS & MEDALS

### Replacing Military Records

If discharge or separation documents are lost, veterans or the next of kin of deceased veterans may obtain duplicate copies by completing forms found on the Internet at <http://www.archives.gov/research/index.html> and mailing or faxing them to the NPRC.

Alternatively, write the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. Specify that a duplicate separation document is needed. The veteran's full name should be printed or typed so that it can be read clearly, but the request must also contain the signature of the veteran or the signature of the next of kin, if the veteran is deceased. Include the veteran's branch of service, service number or Social Security number and exact or approximate dates and years of service. **Use Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining To Military Records."**

It is not necessary to request a duplicate copy of a veteran's discharge or separation papers solely for the purpose of filing a claim for VA benefits. If complete information about the veteran's service is furnished on the application, VA will obtain verification of service.

### Replacing Military Medals

Medals awarded while in active service are issued by the individual military services, if requested by veterans or their next of kin. Requests for replacement medals, decorations, and awards should be directed to the branch of the military in which the veteran served. However, for Air Force (including Army Air Corps) and Army veterans, the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) verifies awards and forwards requests and verification to appropriate services.

Requests for replacement medals should be submitted on Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining To Military Records," which may be obtained at VA offices or the Internet at [http://www.va.gov/vaforms/search\\_action.asp](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/search_action.asp). Forms, addresses, and other information on requesting medals can be found on the Military Personnel Records section of NPRC's Web site at <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/index.html>.

For questions, call Military Personnel Records at (314) 801-0800 or e-mail questions to: [MPR.center@nara.gov](mailto:MPR.center@nara.gov).

When requesting medals, type or clearly print the veteran's full name, include the veteran's branch of service, service number or Social Security number and provide the veteran's exact or approximate dates of military service. The request must contain the signature of the veteran or next of kin, if the veteran is deceased. If available, include a copy of the discharge or separation document, WDAGO Form 53-55 or DD Form 214.

*More on military records, page 6*

## The DVET Corner

*Submitted by Byron Erickson, Director, Veteran Employment and Training (DVET) representative for Montana*

It is interesting to hear different ideas about how Workforce Services staff go about providing Veteran designed services beyond a file search and referral.

It will be fun to see who actually gets nominated for the Veteran Incentive Awards that are given out by the end of this year. Equally notable is how few even know about the Veteran Incentive Award. Do you? If not contact Brad Nelson!

The greatest joy is to see that there are offices and people stepping up to come to the aid of Veterans though they may not be a "DVOP/LVER" or have one in their office. This work is being done for Veterans not because of a "Priority of Service to Veterans" directive or because there is money to provide adequate DVOP/LVER staffing (we all know there is not enough to go around). So why is it happening?

Efforts and opportunities are being made to train ES staff from non DVOP/LVER staffed offices to get the same quality training to as many areas as possible. Shannon Kadrmas, from Glendive, just completed the LES course at NVTI in Denver. This additional training will better equip that office in assisting their area Veterans. The management and Shannon demonstrate that it is not job title that matters but the quality of service to Veterans.

A former LVER, Lee Erickson, from Glasgow, has been assisting Veter-

ans above and beyond a normal ES position for some time. He has utilized a high school diploma program for qualified Veterans. One story came out in the NMJSWC Manager's Report on services to Veterans (Yes, they are read). Read that success story!

Workforce Consultant Lee Erickson has been working with a Veteran that is 67 year old, low income and needs to work. He quit school in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and joined the military. He had no DD-214 or high school diploma. Lee made a referral to Experience Works. Lee then went to the County Commissioners and did a job development for him with the County. He arranged a meeting with the Commissioners, Experience Works and the Veteran. The Veteran now works for various agencies with the County, such as Senior Citizens and the County Weed and Mosquito District. As part of the Experience Works program the participant needs to do work searches while on the program. Most jobs he wanted to apply for required a high school diploma or a GED, so he did not meet the minimum requirement for these jobs. Lee was able to get the Veteran a copy of his military discharge from St. Louis. He then sent the Veteran's information to the Office of Public Instruction and obtained an Honorary High School diploma for him under the program for Veterans with no high school diploma.

The Veteran continues to work for the County and is well liked by those that work with him. His self-esteem has been restored after years of frustration of finding suitable work.

In addition, Lee has assisted two other Veterans in obtaining their Honorary Diplomas. This little known program is accessed at [www.opi.mt.gov/](http://www.opi.mt.gov/) . Go to the top

right window on the page and hit the drop down arrow; page down to "Veteran Programs," then click on "Veterans Honorary Diploma." What a way to help honor and assist Veterans who have an educational barrier to getting a job. Some may ask why this program was implemented. Read the article and you will see why we need to honor and assist our brave men and women who have served. Lee also proceeded to assist the veteran obtain a copy of a DD 214 and did job development! Great job, Lee, still a LVER at heart.

Yes, efforts are underway to bring more monetary assistance for Montana to assist Veterans seeking work. But presently time and money are not the Veteran's allies. Why do we see Workforce Consultants go to Veteran training at NVTI or Veteran Training Conferences? Why do we have a former LVER in Glasgow going out of his way to help Veterans? Because it is the right thing to do, and another way of saying thank you.

*Thank you, for helping our heroes.*

Factoids:

Montana is number 2 in the nation for per capita Veteran population. 16.4%

A number of Montana counties have near or over 20% per capita Veteran populations.

*Mesothelioma cont'd from page 2*

before the mid-70s was fitted with numerous asbestos-containing materials.

Currently, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs recognizes mesothelioma as a service-connected medical condition.

Information and assistance for determining whether a Veteran qualifies for a VA service-connected disability for this condition can be found at:

<http://www.asbestos.com/veterans>  
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*Military records from page 4*

**Correction of Military Records**

The secretary of a military department, acting through a Board for Correction of Military Records, has authority to change any military record when necessary to correct an error or remove an injustice. A correction board may consider applications for correction of a military record, including a review of a discharge issued by courts martial.

The veteran, survivor or legal representative must file a request for correction within three years after discovering an alleged error or injustice. The board may excuse failure to file within this time, if in the interest of justice. It is an applicant's responsibility to show why the filing of the application was delayed and why it would be in the interest of justice for the board to consider it despite the delay.

To justify a correction, it is necessary to show to the satisfaction of the board that the alleged entry or omission in the records was in error or unjust. Applications should include all evidence, such as signed

statements of witnesses or a brief of arguments supporting the correction. Application is made with DD Form 149, available at VA offices, veterans organizations or <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/formsprogram.htm>.

Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) has published the Final Rule for Priority of Service for Veterans. See below:

The notice has been posted to Inside the Insider from: <http://insider.dli.mt.gov/wsd/resources/veterans.asp> and in the WSD Veterans section from: <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/veterans/vetresources.asp> and a cross link under features on the WSD home page. <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/veterans/vetpriorityofservice.pdf>

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**10 Bills to Improve Veterans Benefits**

The House Veterans' Affairs Economic Opportunity Subcommittee recently held a hearing to review 10 bills to improve services and benefits for Veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The bills must be approved by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and the Full House Committee on Veterans' Affairs before being considered by the House of Representatives. Prepared testimony and a link to the webcast of the hearing are available online at <http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/hearing.aspx?newsid=348>

To read the full article, go to <http://www.military.com/news/article/economic-opportunity-subcommittee-reviews-legislation.html>

**IN STATE TRAINING NEWS**

**Tom Mohler (DVOP)** from the Kalispell Job Service office completed the Promoting Partnerships for Employment course on February 13th. This course was conducted at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) in Denver, CO.

**Shannon Kadrmas (Workforce Consultant)** from the Glendive Job Service office completed the Labor Employment Specialist (LES) course on February 27th at NVTI.

**Brad Wiles (DVOP)** from the Helena Job Service office completed the Promoting Partnerships for Employment course on February 27th, also at NVTI.

Congratulations to the three of you. Training for our DVOP/LVER staff at NVTI continues in order to bring them into compliance with existing position requirements. We are also trying to schedule some non-DVOP staff to this training, specifically from offices who have no DVOP/LVER trained staff. Shannon was the first under this project, and we are hoping for several more to follow.

For course information, go to the NVTI website: <http://www.nvti.cudenver.edu/home/homePage.htm>

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*If you, or someone you know, are a recently laid-off Veteran, be sure to file for Unemployment Insurance benefits, **and**, contact your local Job Service office to seek job search assistance, supportive services, and determine potential eligibility for funded retraining programs.*