



WORKFORCE SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF VETERANS

JULY 1, 2009

ISSUE 9-3

REO ASSISTS VETERANS

Rural Employment Opportunities, better known as REO, is a non-profit corporation that has served limited income families across the state of Montana since 1981. Montana is home to hard-working seasonal farm and ranch workers. Sometimes these workers have difficulties making ends meet or find themselves out of work when the season ends. Through the National Farmworker Jobs Program, REO provides a range of employment-related services to eligible workers and their families. These services include career assessment and planning, case management and support, and access to classroom and on-the-job training with the goal of job placement in year-round employment. Some examples of these services may be assistance with the cost of transportation, tools, work clothing, tuition, books and/or a living allowance.

To qualify, an individual must have primarily been employed in agriculture in the two years pre or post active duty (farms or ranches, sugar beet factory, dairy farms, etc.) and earned a wage but still have a very low income. For those who qualify, other family members may receive the services even if the eligible worker does not. For example, a spouse could train for new employment while the worker continues to work in agriculture.

REO is one of more than 50 organizations nationwide that operate the National Farmworker Jobs Program with grant funding through the U.S. Department of Labor. In the past three years, 15% of REO's participants have been Veterans. REO is proud to work with the Veteran population and hopes to continue building on past success.

If it sounds like you or somebody you know may qualify for REO's services, you can find more information at www.reomontana.org or by calling 1.800.546.1140. It's a free phone call and it could be the opportunity you've been waiting for!

Did you know???

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).

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.

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>

Troops to Teachers:

There are still a good number (about 50) of teaching vacancies of various subjects and levels open for immediate fill. It is important to remember that vocational-technical jobs may not require a college degree, just documented work experience.

www.montana.edu/ttt

Tell Veterans about
www.vetsuccess.gov
www.vetbiz.gov
www.jofdav.com
www.vetjobcentral.com
www.gibill.va.gov
www.trooptube.tv/home

Native American Women Veterans

Very little is known about the contributions of Native American women to the United States military. The Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation is attempting to fill this gap by encouraging Native American women Veterans to register with the Memorial so that their stories may be recorded and preserved. They are also conducting research on the contributions of Native American women of earlier eras.

Historians have only recently rediscovered and verified the actions of an Oneida woman, Tyonajanegen, at the battle of Oriskany during the American Revolution (1775-1783). Tyonajanegen was married to an American Army officer of Dutch descent. She fought at her husband's side on horseback during the battle, loading her husband's gun for him after he was shot in the wrist.

The story of Sacajawea, the Shoshone woman who accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition of the early 19th century, is somewhat better known. Much of what is common knowledge is myth, however. Sacajawea has been remembered as a guide. In reality, she served as an interpreter for members of the expedition, who were unfamiliar with the Indian language. "Bird Woman's" service is described in the journals kept by Army Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during the expedition.

Four Native American Catholic Sisters from Fort Berthold, South Dakota worked as nurses for the War Department during the Spanish American War (1898). Originally assigned to the military hospital at Jacksonville, Florida, the nurses

were soon transferred to Havana, Cuba. One of the nurses, Sister Anthony died of disease in Cuba and was buried with military honors.

Charlotte Edith (Anderson) Monture - Fourteen Native American women served as members of the Army Nurse Corps during World War I, two of them overseas. Mrs. Cora E. Sinnard, a member of the Oneida Tribe and a graduate of the Episcopalian School of Nursing in Philadelphia, served eighteen months in France with a hospital unit provided by the Episcopal Church. Charlotte Edith (Anderson) Monture of the Iroquois Nation also served as an Army nurse in France. Charlotte was born in 1890 in Ohsweken, Ontario, Canada. In 1917, she left her job as an elementary school nurse to join the Army Nurse Corps. She later referred to her service in France at a military hospital as "the adventure of a lifetime." Charlotte passed away in 1996, at the age of 106.



Charlotte Edith (Anderson) Monture

Private **Minnie Spotted-Wolf** of Heart Butte, Montana, enlisted in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve in July 1943. She was the

first female American Indian to enroll in the Corps. Minnie had worked on her father's ranch doing such chores as cutting fence posts, driving a two-ton truck, and breaking horses. Her comment on Marine boot camp "Hard but not too hard."

(No picture available)

Native American women lost their lives in the service of their nation. **Katherine Matthews** of Cherokee, North Carolina, joined the Navy in the late 1970s and trained as an Aviation Machinist's Mate. She died while serving in California in 1985. Terri Ann Hagen, a former Army medic, was a member of the Army National Guard when she was killed fighting a fire on Storm King Mountain in Colorado in 1994.



Terri Ann Hagen

As of 1994, 1,509 Native American women and Native Alaskan women were serving in the military forces of the United States. Thousands more have served in the military over time.

Retiree Corner

Pete Timm Bids Farewell

A Career of Service and Volunteerism Spanning Four Decades

My career of service to my country initially began in January 1963 by serving as a U.S. Marine for 20 years, traveling halfway around the world on three occasions to include two tours of duty in Vietnam. My primary duties through the years included recruiting, career planning, supplying helicopter parts and materials as an Aviation Supply Chief, instructing technical and administrative subjects, advising reservists and their families plus advising unit personnel and commanding officers as a First Sergeant of Marines. Additional duties consisted of coordinating burial detail events of fallen Marines.

After retirement from the Corps in September 1982 my attention was directed toward volunteering as a part-time Certified Personal Fitness Trainer with the Helena YMCA. While volunteering, I was simultaneously enhancing my



academic education by attending Carroll College attaining a degree in Public Relations in May, 1990.

Following graduation, I obtained employment with Billings, MT Job Service. Fortunately, my education and experience with military recruiting, volunteering, instructor/trainer, and rating as a VA service-connected Veteran assisted in obtaining the DVOP position in July, 1992.

Serving fellow disadvantaged Veterans to obtain needed services and employment has been very rewarding. By assessing Veteran clients through screening, probing for barriers to employment and referrals to appropriate agencies has enabled Veterans to access well-deserved community and Veteran services and benefits. Intense employment services and follow-up through Case Management has benefited many Veterans in their employment process to obtaining meaningful employment. However, without the assistance of my fellow staff members, management, and dedicated VA and Central Office Personnel, my mission of serving fellow Veterans could not have been accomplished.

To culminate my volunteer endeavors, in 2004 I received a calling to serve as a Hospice Volunteer. This has been by far the most rewarding opportunity, in spite of the feelings of grief I've experienced with the passing of those assigned to my care.

In retrospect, I feel it's important to share that without the decision 28 years ago to seek assistance through the fellowship AA, I realize that my family and my career endeavors would not have been possible.

Semper fi,
Pete Timm, DVOP (Ret)

Pete,

On behalf of your co-workers around the state, the citizens of this nation, and the many Veterans you have served with and for throughout your career, we thank you. Best wishes and successes in your next adventure.

Department of Labor & Industry,
Workforce Services Division
Staff

IN STATE TRAINING NEWS

Kevin Connors (Workforce Consultant) from the Lewistown Job Service office completed the Labor and Employment Specialist (LES) course on April 10.

Amee Bush (DVOP) from the Hamilton Job Service office completed the Promoting Partnerships for Employment (PPE) course on April 3.

Dave Delaney (DVOP) from the Great Falls Job Service office completed the Basic Veterans Benefits (online) course on April 17 and the PPE course on May 1.

Shalako Emly (DVOP) from the Helena Job Service office completed the LES course on April 10.

Joe Fletcher (LVER) from the Great Falls Job Service office completed the PPE course on April 3.

All training is conducted at (or under the auspices) of the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) in Denver, CO. Congratulations to these five specialists from our local Job Service offices.

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

NATIONAL NEWS

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide hotline that is available to anyone experiencing a suicidal crisis. When an individual calls in, they will be able to speak with a professional who will refer the caller to the nearest crisis center and other mental health services. Call 1-800-

273-TALK (8255) or visit the [National Suicide Prevention](#) website.

To ensure Veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began operation of a national suicide prevention hotline for Veterans. Veterans can call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press "1" to reach the VA hotline.

President Obama recently signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This act provides for the one-time payment of \$250 to individuals who get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security benefits and to disabled Veterans that are in receipt of VA Compensation and Pension. Disabled Veterans recovery payments will be deposited to the account on file with VA and are expected to begin arriving sometime this summer. **No action is required on your part.** For more information, please contact the Federal VA at 800-827-1000.

New GI Bill Transfer Rules Give Members More Control

Service members nearing the end of their careers will find it easier than first thought to transfer new [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) education benefits to their spouse or children, under Department of Defense regulations. And service members who elect to transfer GI Bill benefits will be allowed to modify or revoke that decision at any time, thus keeping control of a benefit with an average start value estimated at \$75,000 to \$90,000.

Bob Clark, Assistant Director of Accession Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, discussed the transferability feature of the new GI Bill in some depth during an April 29

phone interview.

The details should comfort many long-serving careerists – including enlisted members facing high-year tenure rules or officers facing mandatory retirement – who worried about being denied transferability because they might not meet a requirement in law to serve four additional years.

Clark said the four-year requirement will be relaxed, and for some waived entirely, for individuals near to retirement. The regulation on transferability isn't final yet because it hasn't been signed. "We're awaiting a general counsel opinion on the [need for] publishing them in the Federal Register", Clark said.

The Department of Veterans Affairs administers all Veterans' education benefits. Defense officials are only responsible for transferability policy because of the potential impact on recruiting and retention. Officials decided to confirm policy details before they officially are set because VA began accepting [Post-9/11 GI Bill applications on Friday May 1](#).

Here then are the transferability details, as explained by Clark:

ELIGIBILITY – Only members on active duty or in the Selected Reserve on or after Aug. 1, 2009, can transfer new GI Bill benefits, and only spouse or to children or to any combination thereof. Immediate family status will be confirmed through the [Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System](#). Unused benefits, up to the full 36 months, can be transferred. "You can give 36 months to one child or one month to 36 children," Clark quipped.

GI Bill cont'd on page 8

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. 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.

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.

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 rep-

resentative 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>.

Returning OEF and OIF Service Members

The Department of Veterans Affairs has a specific website for service members returning from Operation Enduring and Iraq Freedom. Check out:

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

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.

A Word About Veterans' Preference

Since the time of the Civil War, Veterans of the Armed Forces have been given some degree of preference in appointments to Federal jobs. Recognizing their sacrifice, Congress enacted laws to prevent veterans seeking Federal employment from being penalized for their time in military service. Veterans' preference recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served their country in uniform, restores Veterans to a favorable competitive position for government employment, and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled Veterans.

Veterans' preference is not so much a reward for being in uniform as it is a way to help make up for the economic loss suffered by those who answered the nation's call to arms. Historically, preference has been reserved by Congress for those who were either disabled or who served in combat areas. Eligible Veterans receive many advantages in Federal employment, including preference for initial employment and a higher retention standing in the event of layoffs. However, the **Veterans'** preference laws do not guarantee the Veteran a job, nor do they give Veterans preference in internal agency actions such as promotion, transfer, reassignment, and reinstatement.

Veterans' preference in its present form comes from the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, as amended, and is now codified in various provisions of Title 5, United States Code. By law, Veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to

preference over others in hiring from competitive lists of eligibles and also in retention during reductions in force. Preference applies in hiring for virtually all jobs, whether in the competitive or excepted service. In addition to receiving preference in **competitive** appointments, Veterans may be considered for special **noncompetitive** appointments for which only they are eligible.

Note: The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 clarified the scope of the term "Veteran" for the purposes of determining who is entitled to Veterans' preference. OPM is in the process of revising its regulations to conform to this clarification.

To receive preference, a Veteran must have been **discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions** (i.e., with an honorable or general discharge).

Who Is Entitled To Veterans' Preference In Employment?

Five-point preference

Given to those honorably separated Veterans (this means an honorable or general discharge) who served on active duty (not active duty for training) in the Armed Forces:

during any war (this means a war declared by Congress, the last of which was World War II);

during the period April 28, 1952, through July 1, 1955;

for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976;

during the Gulf War period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending January 2, 1992; or

for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom; or

in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized, such as El Salvador, Lebanon, Granada, Panama, Southwest Asia, Somalia, and Haiti.

Medal holders and Gulf War Veterans who originally enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered on active duty on or after October 14, 1982, without having previously completed 24 months of continuous active duty, must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty.

Effective on October 1, 1980, military retirees at or above the rank of major or equivalent, are not entitled to preference unless they qualify as disabled Veterans.

Ten-point preference

Given to those honorably separated Veterans who:

Qualify as disabled Veterans because they have served on active duty in the Armed Forces (including training service in the Reserves or National Guard) at any time and have a present service-connected disability or are receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs; or are Purple Heart recipients;

**Veterans' Preference cont'd
on page 8**

The DVET Corner

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

In the past it seemed that *process* counted for a lot of what Workforce Services and the DVOP/LVER did. We call them "supportive services." While referrals to supportive services remain important, they are not part of the standards of measurement.

Returning the Veteran to work is the criteria that we are all measured by. The DVOP and LVER staff take classes like the PPE (Promoting Partnerships with Employers) to assist them with the tools to promote training and employment opportunities for Veterans with employers. Being proactive and interactive with living wage employers helps build training and employment opportunities for Veterans.

In tougher economic times it is helpful to have working relationships with a variety of employers who in turn assist us in transcending the job opportunities listed on the computer and job board. You are the experts that the Veteran community relies upon to provide transition assistance into employment opportunities.

Your knowledge, tools, and relationships with employers can provide the Veteran training and employment outcomes necessary to

make a difference.

This office hired a disabled Veteran under the VRA program. The Veteran was recommended as a Work Experience by Grant Ellison at VA Vocational Rehabilitation. When it was evident that the Veteran was doing well in the position as a Veteran Program Assistant he was directly appointed to a GS-5/7 position non-competitively. Knowing this program was available helped this office and a disabled Veteran. Many qualified disabled Veterans can possibly obtain Federal employment through this program. More about this Special Appointing Authority for Veterans can be found at <http://www.usajobs.gov/EI4.asp>

Your office may have innovative ideas for placing Veterans. The time proven, **non exhaustive**, methods listed below can help meet Veteran placement goals.

Using the phone call to refer Veterans, not just the e mail system.

24 hour hold on non-Vet referrals. Referring the Veterans first!

Keep that job order on hold until your file search or waiting period is completed.

Creative file searching to find veterans who may qualify for a good job listing.

Put the Vet applications on top of the pile before giving them to an employer.

Make that job development call

to an employer while the Veteran is still at your desk.

Use the scheduler on MWORKS to see if the Veteran has a complete application or to see if there are indicators that they need help. This is an important tool for new Veteran clients and those who make changes to their file electronically.

Contact Veterans who have been in the MWORKS system for a long time and have not obtained work. Many times that is where you will find a Veteran needing intensive services assistance. Could be that file needs closed out.

They can be located by doing a Vet print off of MWORKS.

Create a list of employers who are pro-Veteran and want the opportunity to hire Veterans.

Financial Information for Military Families

Kiplinger's, in conjunction with the Better Business Bureau's Military Line, has published a special personal-finance guide for military families that focuses on how to be financially prepared for deployment and offers tips on the special housing, insurance and tax issues that confront service members. The guide has/will be distributed free to military personnel and their families around the world. A copy is posted at:

Kiplinger.com/links/military

Veterans' Preference cont'd from page 6**Or:**

the spouse of a Veteran unable to work because of a service-connected disability;

the unmarried widow of certain deceased Veterans; and

the mother of a Veteran who died in service or who is permanently and totally disabled.

When applying for Federal jobs, eligible Veterans should claim preference on their application or resume. Applicants claiming 10-point preference must complete form SF-15, Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference. Veterans who are still in the service may be granted 5 points tentative preference on the basis of information contained in their applications, but they must produce a DD Form 214 prior to appointment to document entitlement to preference.

Note: Reservists who are retired from the Reserves but are not receiving retired pay are not considered "retired military" for purposes of **Veterans'** preference.

For more specific information on Veterans' preference, OPM has developed the VetsInfo Guide. This guide explains how the Federal employment system works and how Veterans' preference and the special appointing authorities for Veterans operate within the system. It is available on the Internet at: <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetsinfo.htm>.

To transfer benefits, members must have served a minimum of six years and commit to serving four more from date benefit transfer is approved.

However, exceptions – one permanent and five temporary -- will be allowed to the four-year added service requirement.

PERMANENT EXCEPTION: If a service member who already has served at least 10 years is barred by service policy or statute from serving an additional four years, because of high-year tenure rules or mandatory retirement rules, they still will be allowed to transfer GI bill benefits if they agree to serve the maximum amount of time allowed by that policy or law.

TEMPORARY EXCEPTIONS: Defense officials will allow five other waivers to the four-year requirement of additional service for categories of members nearing retirement eligibility or with retirement orders in hand. These exceptions are to recognize, said Clark, "that we have a senior force out there who, had they had this opportunity many years ago, they probably would have selected transferability for their family members." Granting these exceptions also help force managers, he said. Without them, the services would see thousands of retirement-eligible service-members trying to stay four years longer to qualify for GI Bill transferability. That could have "a very negative impact on our force profiles," Clark said.

"So we said, 'Let's look at a way that we can phase this group out.' We developed five rules. All will sunset in 2013."

1) Members retirement eligible by Aug. 1, 2009, may transfer GI Bill benefits to an immediate family member and face no additional service re-

quirement. "Retirement eligible" means completion of 20 years of active service or 20 qualifying years of reserve service.

2) Members with approved orders to retire on or after Aug. 1, 2009, but before July 1, 2010, will not have to serve added time to transfer benefits. This is to avoid forcing the services and members to change set retirement dates in the next year or so. Retirements set for after July 1, 2010, officials decided, could be changed with little difficulty.

3) Members who first become retirement eligible on or after Aug. 1, 2009, but before Aug. 1, 2010, will be required to serve one additional year from the date that transfer of GI Bill benefits is approved.

4) Members who become retirement eligible on or after Aug. 1, 2010, but before Aug. 1, 2011, will have to serve two additional years from the date that benefit transfer is approved.

5) Members who become retirement eligible on or after Aug. 1, 2011, but before Aug. 1, 2012, will have to serve three additional years after benefit transfer is approved.

SUSTAINED ELIGIBILITY – After transfer of benefits, spouse eligibility will not be affected by divorce, and children will stay eligible even if they marry. But the member retains ownership of the benefit and can modify or revoke transfer at any time without explanation. Also, the GI Bill benefit cannot be treated by judges as property to be shared in a divorce.

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LIMITS ON USE – A spouse can use GI Bill benefits like the member. The monthly living stipend, set to match local Basic Allowance for Housing rate, won't be paid if the member is on active duty. If the member has left active duty, the spouse will be paid the living allowance. Children get the allowance whenever they use GI Bill benefits.

Also, the spouse has 15 years to use benefits after the member leaves service. Children can use only until age 26. They can start using transferred GI Bill benefits after graduating from high school or at age 18.

A spouse can use transferred benefits immediately. A child can't use GI Bill benefits until the member has served at least 10 years.

"We hope to start to accept requests for transfers in June," said Clark. "But the earliest date transfer would be approved is Aug. 1."

To comment, e-mail milupdate@aol.com, write to *Military Update*, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111 or visit: militaryupdate.com.

For more information check out the [Post-911 GI Bill Transferability](#)

Officials Address Gulf War Illness Research

The House Veterans' Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, led by Chairman Harry Mitchell (D-Ariz.), recently conducted the first of a series of hearings on Gulf War Illness research. The hearing provided a review of the history of the research that has been conducted on Gulf War Illness, examined the methodology used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to determine possible ex-

posure to toxins and pesticides, and focused on the ongoing challenges Veterans face as a result of their service in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Prepared testimony and a link to a webcast of the hearing is available on the [House Committee on Veterans' Affairs website](#).

New Campaign Addresses Mental Health Stigma

A new Department of Defense (DoD) campaign aims to minimize, if not eliminate for servicemembers the stigma attached to seeking mental-health assistance. "The Real Warriors Campaign" is sponsored by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. The Real Warriors Campaign uses social networking, radio, television, posters, flyers, and a website to reach active-duty servicemembers, military veterans, members of the National Guard and the Reserve, as well as family members and health professionals. The campaign features stories of real service members who have sought treatment and continue to serve. For more information, visit the [Real Warriors](#) website.

Veterans Service Officers

Veterans Service Officers (VSO) are a vital link between the Veteran, Veteran Service Providers, DVOP/LVER Specialists, and the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment staff. Below is a listing of Montana's VSOs and their contact information.

Belgrade: 406-388-4601
Kelly Nevin and Janine Mahn

Billings: 406-248-8579
Cheryl Heald and Dorothy Jarosz

Butte: 406-533-0910
Kevin Stone

Great Falls: 406-452-2265
Valarie Martin and David Capps

Havre: 406-265-4225
Diana LaBuda

Helena:
406-495-2080/2081/2082
Pat Crowley
Ruddy Reilly
Lori Perkió

Kalispell: 406-755-3795
Sherry Stewart and Jane Ger-alds

Lewistown: 406-538-3174
Sue Foster

Miles City: 406-232-1203
Michael Cohan

Missoula: 406-542-2501
Len Leibinger and Melinda Bux-ton

Education

Remember: Not applying for scholarships is like turning down free money. Get started on your search for scholarships today - visit the Military.com Scholarship Finder.

<http://web50.military.com/cgi-bin/outlog.cgi?url=http%3A//aid.military.com/scholarship/search-for-scholarships.do%3Fesrc%3Dmr.nl&code=mrtxt.nl>

Watch next month's edition for an article on "Grateful Nation Montana"; an education program targeting children of Montana Soldiers killed in action.

Thank You Veterans