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Dover Air Force Base, Dover, Delaware
2018, Volume 1



Operation Warm Heart

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Operation Warm Heart**

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Photo courtesy First Sergeants Council



Thank you Sergeants for taking care of our troops.
 Jeff Utain American Publishers LLC., representative presents Operation Warm Heart Council a donation of \$1.5K. American Publishers have been producing the Dover AFB Military Appreciation Booklets for the last 3 years and they have supported the First Sergeants 501 (c) 3 charity.

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Dover First Sergeants

Operation Warm Heart

**I am a first sergeant.
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time and energy to their needs,
their health, morale, and
welfare. I grow in strength by
strengthening my people. My job
is done in faith. My people build
faith. My job is people—everyone
is my business.**

....Part of the First Sergeant's Creed.



Leading the food basket assembly line, Master Sgts. Montrell Jones, 436th Logistics Readiness Squadron; Tony Christ, 436th Operations Support Squadron; and Juan DeJesus, 436th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, first sergeants, fill Thanksgiving holiday food baskets with food items Nov. 18, 2016, at the Landings on Dover Air Force Base, Del. (U.S. Air Force photo by Roland Balik)

Dover AFB First Sergeant's

The Dover FSC's Good Shepherd Fund falls under Operation Warm Heart

Operation Warm Heart is an Air Force first sergeants' program aimed at helping Airmen with financial assistance.

Airmen and families come together to help those less fortunate in our communities. This non-profit organization distributes charitable donations to service members and their families all year long.

Air Force Aid and the Combined Federal Campaign annually assist financially strapped Airmen but Operation Warm Heart Airmen can turn to for immediate financial aid.

Operation Warmheart, a nonprofit organization, was established by the First Sergeants Council to manage, receive and distribute charitable funds to service members and families who are in need of assistance.

The Dover FSC's Good Shepherd Fund falls under Operation Warm Heart, a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to providing emergency financial relief, morale building, and quality of life enhancements to military members and their families stationed at Dover AFB. This program is organized by the Dover FSC with an operating budget solely based on fund

raising activities by the FSC and contributions made by the local community.

In addition to providing assistance to military families, the Dover FSC provides Commissary gift cards and grants to aid families in need when assistance by other means cannot be obtained. This is to prevent the families from an unintended burden through loan repayment during emergency situations.

As stated in the First Sergeant's Creed, people is their job and everyone is their business, taking care of people is a first sergeant's duty 24/7, 365 days a year.

Operation Warm Heart is a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization that is dedicated to providing emergency financial relief, morale building, and quality of life enhancements to military members and their families that are stationed at Dover Air Force Base.

For more information about Operation Warm Heart, contact your unit's first sergeant.

Email: operationwarmheart.de@gmail.com
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First Sergeants' Council on Dover Air Force Base

First Sergeants aren't known to be pushovers, but those at Dover Air Force Base have a soft spot when Airmen and their families are in need. They have a way to help, too, through Dover's First Sergeants' Council.

First Sergeants are senior enlisted personnel, and they are the backbone of the Air Force. They are responsible for the welfare and morale of enlisted men and women in their units.

First sergeants are also the base commander's key link with enlisted members of the Air Force. At Dover, the First Sergeants' Council provides that link.

There are 12 members of Dover's council, who meet weekly. The council president is SMSgt Steven Ousley.

Morale and welfare of Dover Air Force Base personnel are the top priority. "The First Sergeants' Council here on Dover meet with the Wing Commander monthly to go over morale and welfare issues and to discuss ways to improve the quality of life for every Airman and civilian that works on Dover AFB," said MSgt Montrell Jones, who is the president of the council's charity, Operation Warm Heart.

There are First Sergeants' Councils at every Air Force Base and most have Operation Warm Heart or something similar.

The fund is set up to make life a little easier for Dover's servicemen and women, and also to help those who face hardships or emergencies that fall outside of the ability of the Air Force Aid Society, the Air Force's main charitable society, to help, said MSgt Jones.

In 2017, the council gave \$11,000 in various kinds of assistance, up from about \$4,000 last year from donations.

"Operation Warm Heart provides all kinds of morale and quality of life events for all of Dover AFB personnel," MSgt Jones said.

"This includes free movies at the base theater, outside movies in the park, and "Angel Tree" for holiday gifts for Airmen. There are free dormitory dinners. Also, we build development of our Airmen through different leadership

panels, he said. The council helped make a good Thanksgiving for 210 families with a free turkey this year, up from 146 turkeys last year. In late summer, there was a "back to school" event with free school supplies and backpacks for children of military families.

In June, there was even free gasoline for 30 lucky Airmen, E-4 and below, who showed up at a designated gas station over three to four hours, Sgt. Jones said. "Whoever showed up, and was E-4 or below, got free gas during the event," he said. The council budgeted \$670 for the event.

Some of the most important work for the council, however, is helping airmen or families in distress who fall outside the guidelines of Air Force Aid.

"Air Force Aid has limitations on what it can give as a grant," he said. "An example is that if an Airman has a sick parent, but one not gravely sick, there is still real stress about getting home to see the parent. This Airman most likely would not qualify for a grant through Air Force Aid. It would have to be loan to get the Airman home," he said.

There is more flexibility with Operation Warm Heart. "The First Sergeants, through a simple vote, can approve funds to get that Airman home or provide enough to offset the costs. A typical grant ranges from \$200 to \$400," said MSgt Jones.

The Air Force's main charity, the Air Force Aid Society (www.afas.org), has supported the Air Force mission for years by providing worldwide emergency assistance, including education assistance programs and a variety of base community enhancement programs. Operation Warm Heart provides an important supplement to Air Force Aid.

To contact the First Sergeants' Council or to make donations to the Good Shepherd Fund: Contact MSgt Montrell Jones at 436 LRS/CCF, 639 Evereux St., Dover AFB, DE 19902. Or you can call DSN 445-4992 or his cell at 302-363-0376. ■



Congratulations to TSgt Ashley Medlin from 436 SFS for winning the Operation Warm Heart Banner contest, Great Job! • Dover's First Sergeants' Council, wing leadership, volunteers and donors made Thanksgiving memorable for Team Dover Airmen and families in 17 squadrons on base. Each holiday, food baskets contain a frozen turkey as well as also other gifts from the First Sergeants' Good Shepherd Fund and local businesses and individuals.



Photos: Courtesy of U.S. Air Force, Roland Balik

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE **WARRIOR GAMES**

The 2018 Department of Defense Warrior Games featured 11 sporting events with about 300 athletes representing teams from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, U.S. Special Operations Command, as well as the United Kingdom Armed Forces, Australian Defense Force and Canadian Armed Forces.

Adaptive sports help wounded warriors build strength and endurance while drawing inspiration from teammates. The goal of the Warrior Games is to demonstrate the incredible potential of wounded warriors through competitive sports.



U.S. Navy E-5/P02 Alan Thomas, U.S. Air Force E-7/MSgt Kenneth Guinn and U.S. Army E-5/SGT John Weasner pose for a photo op during the Medal Ceremony after the powerlifting competition. Athletes use a specially designed bench that allows for equal and fair competition between athletes who may or may not have lower limbs. (DoD photo by John Leyba)



Track and field event during the 2018 DoD Warrior Games at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs on June 2, 2018. (DoD Photo by Roger L. Wollenberg)

Leaders, Celebrities Salute 'Inspirational' 2018 DoD Warrior Games

By Shannon Collins, DoD News, Defense Media

www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1546444/leaders-celebrities-salute-inspirational-2018-dod-warrior-games/

The 2018 Department of Defense Warrior Games, described by a senior Air Force leader as 'absolutely' successful and inspirational, drew to a close at the U.S. Air Force Academy on, June 9.

After a week of competition, more than 608 medals were presented at over 11 events to athletes from the Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, Army, U.S. Special Operations Command, as well as the United Kingdom, Australian and Canadian armed forces.

For the first time in DoD Warrior Games history, the games hosted the Canadian armed forces, held three new sports -- indoor rowing, powerlifting and the cycling time trial and held a two-day sports expo, where 450 family members experienced wheelchair rugby and tennis, family archery and shooting and sled hockey, said Air Force Lt. Gen. Gina Grosso, 2018 DoD Warrior Games director.

Grosso recognized the athletes, families, Air Force Academy team, the mayor of Colorado Springs and the hundreds of volunteers who supported the games.

Inspirational Warrior Games

Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Stephen W. Wilson said the success of the games could be measured "by the smiles given and shared by the lives saved, by the steps forward the athletes are making and by the inspiration that you've given to everyone here."

"If that's how we define success, I'd say these games were absolutely, unbelievably successful," Wilson said.

This year's Warrior Games also showcase unity among the participating partners and allies, Wilson said. "For all of our coalition partners, just like we fight together, we compete together," he said. "You make us all better and stronger. There's never been a more important time in our nation to have partners and allies and friends like you. Thank you, very much."

Wilson said the athletes are an "inspiration for not only the Department of Defense, but for this whole nation and all of our partner nations."

Wilson also thanked the coaches, caregivers, supporters and families.

Stewart's Congratulations

Jon Stewart, who's hosted the DoD Warrior Games for the past three years, also congratulated the athletes and their families.

"It's an honor," Stewart said. "I walk out of here twice the man I was walking in here, and you all make that possible. I'm so thankful for the opportunity. From my family to you, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for everything you do.

"You're the best of us. Thank you," he added.

The athletes recognized Stewart's work at the games for the past few years by giving him heartfelt thanks and a DoD Warrior Games flag signed by the athletes and their families.

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Athletes receive their medals after competing in the cycling competition. (DoD photo by John Leyba)

Warrior Games History

The Department of Defense (DoD), and the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) in a joint effort started the Warrior Games competition in 2010. The Warrior Games showcase the resilient spirit of today's wounded, ill or injured service members through Paralympic-style sports. The first Warrior Games was held in Colorado Spings, Co. and was named the Best New Sports Event by SportsTravel magazine.

"Recognition of the Warrior Games is recognition for our nation's finest who serve in the Armed Forces," said USOC Chief Executive Officer Scott Blackmun. "The USOC, DoD and United Service Organizations (USO) are honored to provide opportunities through physical activity and sport that assist in the rehabilitation process and get these heroic men and women back to living full and productive lives."

One-hundred eighty-nine wounded, injured and ill servicemen and women competed in the 2010 Warrior Games from all five service branches. The goal of the competition was to inspire recovery, capitalize on physical fitness, and promote new opportunities for growth and achievement. The Warrior Games demonstrate the continued role physical fitness can play in service members' lives regardless of injury.

...2018 DoD Warrior Games continued from page 9

Honoring the Fallen

During closing ceremonies, the Air Force band, "Blue Steel" played an acoustic version of "Amazing Grace" as photos were displayed to honor previous DoD Warrior Games athletes who've passed away in the past year -- Air Force Capt. Chris Cochrane, 2016 torchbearer, Air Force Capt. Austin Williamson, 2017 torchbearer and Ultimate Champion silver medalist, and U.S. Special Forces Command's Army Staff Sgt. Luke Yetter, who earned the Heart of the Team award in 2017.

"One of the more difficult parts about these games is that while you all come together as a family, and you leave here as one, among the highs of the games of the competition, we do sometimes lose a brother or sister along the way," Stewart said. "Let's take a moment to honor them."

Ultimate Champions

To earn the Ultimate Champion title, athletes compete in their respective functional classifications in eight sporting events. Each service branch was allotted two slots. Ultimate Champion athletes earned points based on their individual results in the events. The Ultimate Champion is the athlete who earned the most points in the eight sporting events. Army Staff Sgt. Ross Alewine earned the gold medal, Air Force Senior Airman Rafael Morfinencisco earned the silver medal and Army Staff Sgt. Altermese Kendrick took home the bronze medal.



100 meter race (DoD Photo by Gabriel Christus)



Army Sgt. Chris McGinnis and his 17-month-old son Ace celebrate Army's gold medal in wheelchair basketball. (DoD Photo by Roger L. Wollenberg)

"It's amazing to take home the gold in Ultimate Champion; I couldn't have done it without the support of Team Army and the support of the cadre," said Alewine, who earned gold in wheelchair basketball, rowing and track and field, two silver medals in swimming and a bronze in cycling.

"I've been training every day, six days a week. I've lost 41 pounds in two-and-a-half months," Alewine added. "I wanted to show other guys who are injured like me that if I can do it, any of you guys can do it. I also wanted to make my daughters, Carson and Kenney, proud. Go Army!"

Kendrick said he was honored just to be among the competition for the Ultimate Champion title. "I've given it my all, I always can find something to improve on," he said. "If I'm able to come back again, I'm going to snag it."

Kendrick earned gold medals in the 100-meter hand cycling in the time trial event and in the indoor rowing 1-minute sprint race and a silver medal in the powerlifting 70-kilogram in her disability category.

Kendrick, a chaplain assistant with the Chaplain Family Life Training Center, Fort Hood, Texas, said her coaches motivated her so much last year, she learned how to swim so she could compete in swimming at this year's Warrior Games.

"The team is great this year, the coaches are magnificent. To just be with them every year and to just show what they have helped us to accomplish, it's amazing," Kendrick said. "I didn't know how to swim. I had to go home and get into the water. I met with Coach Abita in the pool here. He's an awesome coach and did more swimming than I've ever done in my life. It was a huge accomplishment for me."

Kendrick said her family and leadership cheered her on every step of the way. "My chaplain, [Army Lt. Col.] Steve Moser, and his wife, they're my greatest fans," she said. "I really love them, and thank them for their prayers and their support. I also thank my family, my sister, Sharon, and those who came to visit, like my brother, Carolos, and my nephew, Army Capt. Dion Theres at Fort Carson. I really do thank them for their support, as well as the support

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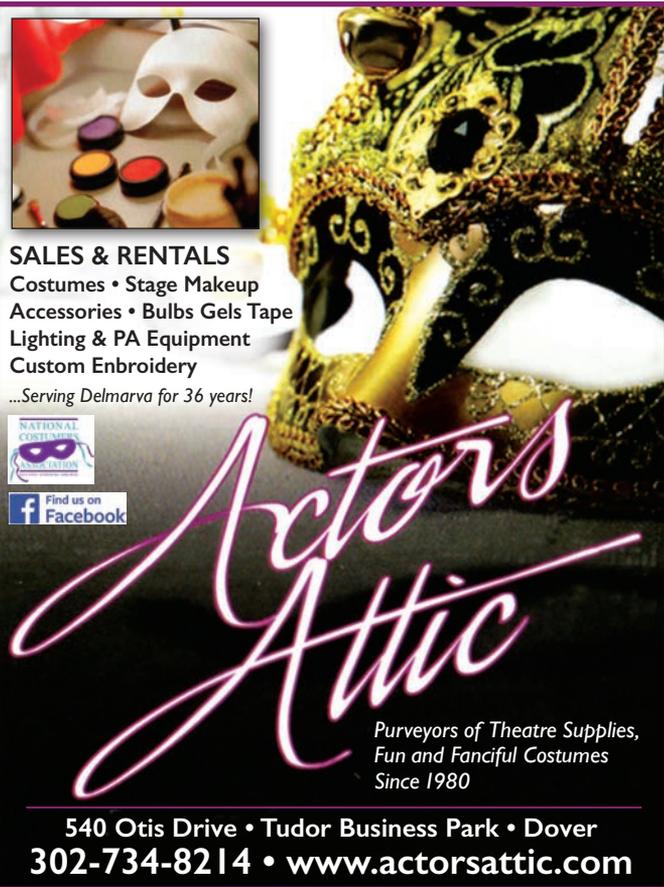
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...2018 DoD Warrior Games continued from page 11

of Team Army, the Airmen, Marines, U.K., all of us, thank everyone for all of their support. We appreciate everyone's support. Go Team Army!"

Heart of the Team

The athletes said they felt a sense of accomplishment by winning their medals, yet most of them said their biggest takeaway from the week was the sense of camaraderie and friendship. The Heart of the Team award is awarded to one member on each team who best exemplified character, integrity and sportsmanship. The teams chose who received the awards.

The recipients are: Army Spc. Brent Garlic, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Jason Pacheco, Navy medically retired Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony Dieli, U.S. Special Operations Command Army Master Sgt. George Vera, Royal Air Force veteran Cpl. Michael Bates, Australian Leading Seaman Vanessa Broughill and Canadian Master Cpl. Charlene Kendall.

"I was very surprised to get this. I thought James Howard should've gotten it," said a surprised Vera. It sums up what Socom is all about: putting ourselves last every time, no matter what. We're all about team and family."

"I'm very proud of my dad and all of the hard work he's done," Vera's daughter, Isabella, 11, said. "Even if you're in a wheelchair like my dad, you can do more than you think."

Passing the Torch

Team Air Force's Master Sgt. Shay Hampton passed the torch to Wilson, who passed the torch to Socom's

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Teammates applaud Army Spc. Brent Garlic after he receives the Army Heart of the Team award. DoD photo by Mark Reis

commander, Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, who passed the torch to Socom's Army Sgt. 1st Class Brant Ireland, officially closing the 2018 DoD Warrior Games.

"Thank you General Wilson, General Grosso, the DoD Warrior Games staff and the United States Air Force Academy for hosting a tremendous Warrior Games 2018," Thomas said. "Thanks as well to Jon Stewart. Congratulations to all the athletes who competed and a special thank you to the families of our warriors. You are the rock and an inspiration to us all."

Next year, Thomas said, the U.S. Special Operations Command will host the Warrior Games in Tampa, Florida.

"I hope to see you all there," he said. 🌟



Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sgt. Carnell Martin competes in powerlifting. (DoD Photo by Roger L. Wollenberg)

2018 Medal Results

Team	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Air Force	70	56	39	165
Navy	41	32	28	101
Army	39	33	26	98
Marine Corps	44	30	14	88
SOCOM	29	19	17	65
United Kingdom	22	16	14	52
Australia	13	9	9	31
Canada	5	5	2	12

2019 Warrior Games Information

The U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) will host the 2019 Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games June 22-30 in Tampa, Fla.

Approximately 300 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans will participate in the competition.

The athletes will represent the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Special Operations Command. Athletes from the U.K. Armed Forces, Australian Defence Force and Canadian Armed Forces will also compete.

The 2019 DoD Warrior Games will feature 11 adaptive sports: archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field, wheelchair basketball and three new sports debuting this year: indoor rowing, powerlifting, and time trial cycling. (The shooting event is conducted using Olympic competition pellet guns).

Who is eligible to participate:

Before a wounded, ill or injured service member may compete to participate in the Games, he or she **must first be enrolled in his/her respective service's wounded warrior program**, which provides non-medical care to post-9/11 service members who are seriously wounded, ill or injured. The links below provide details for how to contact the respective wounded warrior program:

- **U.S. Army Warrior Care and Transition**
www.wct.army.mil/index.html
- **U.S. Air Force Wounded Warrior**
www.woundedwarrior.af.mil/
- **U.S. Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment**
www.woundedwarrior.marines.mil/
- **U.S. Special Operations Command Care Coalition**
www.socom.mil/care-coalition
- **U.S. Navy Wounded Warrior**
www.navywoundedwarrior.com/
- **U.S. Coast Guard (under U.S.Navy)**
www.navywoundedwarrior.com/

Once enrolled, service members may then participate in structured camps, clinics, trials and daily adaptive sports activities that are executed nationwide with support from the Department of Defense's military adaptive sports program. Athletes are able to compete based on their professionalism, dedication and determination and that of their military medical teams' and families' supporting their recovery efforts.

Warrior Games are important to the DoD and the Armed Services

Fitness and teamwork are a way of life in the military. Serious illness or injury can profoundly impact that way of life, often confining a service member to a hospital bed and significantly altering their physical capabilities.

Adaptive sports help wounded warriors build strength and endurance, while also drawing inspiration from their teammates. The goal of the Warrior Games is to demonstrate the incredible potential of wounded warriors through competitive sports.

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THE DENTIST

Dr. Karen Rose is an alumna of the University of Maryland Dental School, which is the direct descendant of the world's very first dental school: The Baltimore College of Dental Surgery (BCDS).

An act of Maryland General Assembly chartered BCDS in 1840. BCDS originated the Doctor of Dental Surgery degree and was the first school in the world to offer a science-based curriculum in dentistry. www.dental.umaryland.edu.

Dr. Rose, with over 35 years of experience in the Dental Field, served as a Commissioned Officer in the 436th Airlift Flight Dental Squadron here at Dover Air Force Base. A research scientist with the American Dental Association Health Foundation, Dr. Rose was the first to document a phenomenon that she named "Swimmers Calculus." She has published in multiple professional journals including The New England Journal of Medicine, The Journal of the American Dental Association and The Journal of Dental Research. She served as a State of Delaware Dentist Administrator and she is a consummate dental professional.

Dr. Rose established this family-oriented dental practice with a passionate commitment to her patients and insists that her staff is as dedicated to providing the highest quality dental care to restore optimal dental health in a comfortable and compassionate atmosphere to people of all ages. Our oldest patient of record is 102, and our youngest patient of record is six months old!



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2018 USMC Warrior Games Trials. Around 250 athletes from a half dozen international teams vied with USMC Wounded Warrior Battalions East and West in the adaptive sports competition. (DoD Photo by T. L. Cornwell)

Military Adaptive Sports Program



Are you an active duty wounded, ill, or injured Service member looking for an adaptive reconditioning opportunity?

<http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/carecoordination/masp/>

Military Adaptive Sports Program (MASP)

The Office of Warrior Care Policy oversees the Military Adaptive Sports Program (MASP), which provides reconditioning activities and competitive athletic opportunities to all wounded, ill and injured Service members to improve their physical and mental quality of life throughout the continuum of recovery and transition.

This program is designed to enhance recovery by engaging wounded, ill, and injured Service members early in individualized physical and cognitive activities outside of traditional therapy

settings. The program hopes to inspire recovery and physical fitness and encourage new opportunities for growth and achievement. The benefits of physical activity for injured Service members include reduced stress, increased quality of life, lower blood pressure, weight management, and enhancement of the rehabilitative process.

Through this program, Service members also have access to the Healing Arts, which support both physical and psychological recovery and rehabilitation from visible and invisible wounds of war including traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and others.

Adaptive Sports Site Coordinators

WCP executes MASP at three major Medical Treatment Facilities. Site Coordinators facilitate daily activities, access to community-based events and resources, sports camps, and clinics

MASP offers a variety of single-sport clinics, multiple-sport camps, and mentorship opportunities to help wounded, ill and injured Service



Army Warrior Games Trials at Fort Bliss, Texas. (DoD photo by Roger L. Wollenberg)

...continued on page 16

...Military Adaptive Sports Program continued from page 15 members learn new skills and promote lifelong fitness and well-being.

Regional Coordinators

Regional Coordinators are available at military treatment facilities and installations across the country. They work within the military services' wounded, ill, and injured programs including:

- **U.S. Army Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCT)** <http://wct.army.mil>
- **U.S. Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor (NWW)** www.navywoundedwarrior.com
- **U.S. Air Force Wounded Warrior Program (AFW2)** www.woundedwarrior.af.mil
- **U.S. Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment (USMC WWR)** www.woundedwarrior.marines.mil
- **U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Warrior Care Program (Care Coalition)** www.socom.mil

Adaptive Activities Include:

The activities listed are examples and not an exhaustive list of MASP-approved events. Cross Country and Track • Cycling • Golf • Hiking Wheelchair Basketball • Baseball and Softball

Field Sports such as Discuss, Shotput and Javelin Paddling Sports such as Kayaking and Canoeing Rock Climbing • Rodeo • Sitting Volleyball Sled Hockey • Snow Skiing • Surfing Swimming and Scuba Diving • Triathlon Air Rifle, Air Pistol, Skeet and Trap Shooting Equine • Archery • Hunting and Fishing • Yoga

For more information on the Military Adaptive Sports <http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/carecoordination/masp>



Team U.S. member Marine Corps veteran Sgt. Michael Nicholson during 2017 Invictus Games golf competition. DoD photo by Roger L. Wollenberg

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Helping Veterans Transition



Where did the time go? Just a while ago, you were in your military career serving our nation and now you are sitting in the Transitional Assistance Program class. The assignment to Dover Air Force Base had some challenges, but overall it was a productive tour that saw multiple successes. Now Dover will be your final assignment before transitioning to Veteran status. As you sit in class, reviewing documents, there are multiple questions concerning this transition. Briefers discussed preparing job resumes, highlight job interviewing techniques, and mention filing for disability compensation. Your anxiety increases as you wonder if you are prepared for life on the other side. During the final day, a briefer from the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs addresses the audience. They discuss preparing for post-military life, networking for employment success, and tips for disability compensation filing. The briefer highlights that their agency is for all Delaware Veterans and you have decided to remain in Delaware. With their assistance, maybe the transition won't be so bad after all.

The Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs is a statewide agency connecting 72,000 Delaware Veterans with benefits earned through dedicated military service. The agency mission statement, "dedicated to advancing information, providing benefits and creating opportunities for service members, veterans, and their families in recognition of their service to the Nation and their value to our community" provides a reminder of service before self.

The commission employs three Veteran Service Officers (VSOs), one per county, that assist Veterans with navigating the federal, state, and local resources available to them. VSOs are trained and accredited by the US Department of Veterans Affairs and provide assistance to veterans, their families, and survivors. They provide guidance with Compensation and Pension, Health Care, Education and Training, Employment, and Burial and Survivor benefits.

The Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs oversees two Veteran Memorial Cemeteries one in Bear and the other in Millsboro. Honorably discharged Veterans who meet residency and service time qualifications are eligible for interment in these cemeteries, in addition to, eligible family members. Burial applications can be completed at the cemetery or online at <http://veteransaffairs.delaware.gov/delaware-veterans-memorial-cemetery/>.

The commission works diligently with federal, state, and community organizations to secure Veteran resources. The Department of Labor is utilized for employment and training opportunities. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development and Delaware State Housing Authority are used to secure housing/eliminate Veteran homelessness. Delaware public universities are contacted to ensure Post-911 GI Bill knowledge and understanding of the Veteran Student experience. The Wilmington VA Medical Center, with three state locations, is a source for Veteran medical and mental health treatment options, along with various community health partners.

Delaware Veterans Trust Fund is an "emergency" financial assistance program available to honorably discharged Veterans with a verifiable financial crisis. Examples of assistance are overdue rent payments, utility payments, vehicle repairs, etc. Citizens donate to the fund and the Friends of Delaware Veterans non-profit organization handle fundraising. If you are interested in donating please go to <http://delawareveteranstrustfund.com/> or contact the commission office. If you or a Veteran you know need assistance, please have them contact the commission office.

The Commission of Veterans Affairs is proud to assist veterans and looks forward to welcoming all military members after they complete their service. Enjoy your duty now and we'll see you soon!

*Larence Kirby, CMSgt (ret), Executive Director, DCVA
(302) 739-2293 larence.kirby@state.de.us*



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THE WORD 'INVICTUS' IS LATIN FOR 'UNCONQUERED'

The 2013 Warrior Games held in the United States was visited by the Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry.

Impressed by the positive impact sport could have on the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded, injured and ill servicemembers.

He vowed to take the idea and launch a similar event in the UK.

The Invictus Games Foundation was established and in 2014 and London hosted the inaugural Invictus Games



2017 Invictus Games
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Lara Mastel, left, and veteran Marine Sgt. Gabby Graves-Wakes, right, pose at the medal podium with a Canadian competitor and Prince Harry of Wales after competing in the women's recumbent bike time trial during the 2017 Invictus Games at High Park in Toronto, Ontario, September 26, 2017. (DoD photo by Sgt Cedric R. Haller II/Released)

The 2018 Invictus Games in Sydney Australia will be held from 20 - 27 October 2018

www.invictusgames2018.org

The Sydney Games will attract more than 500 competitors from 18 nations to compete in 11 adaptive sports and will recognize and thank families and friends for their role and the challenges they share in supporting our wounded warriors. Sydney will host around 1000 family and friends who'll be in the stands cheering.

The Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry, asked these questions. How do these men and women find the motivation to move on and not be defined by their injuries?

How can we challenge perceptions and send a positive message about life beyond disability to an international audience?

They have been tested and challenged, but they have not been overcome. They have proven that by embracing each other and the support of family and friends, they can reclaim their future.

They are Invictus. Most of us will never know the horrors of combat. Horrors so great that many servicemen and women suffer life-changing injuries, both visible and invisible, while serving their countries, while serving us.

The word 'Invictus' is Latin for 'unconquered' and embodies the fighting spirit of our wounded, injured and ill servicemen and women.

Invictus Games Foundation

In 2014 the Invictus Games Foundation was established and London hosted the inaugural Invictus Games with more than 400 competitors from 13 nations.

Orlando, Florida was the location of the second Invictus Games in 2016 with more than 500 competitors participating from 15 nations.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada hosted the 3rd Invictus Games with more than 550 competitors from 17 nations.

2018 Invictus Games in Sydney Australia

The 2018 Invictus Games in Sydney Australia will be held from 20 - 27 October 2018. The Sydney Games will attract more than 550 competitors from 18 allied nations are expected to compete in 11 adaptive sports and will recognize and thank families and friends for their role and the challenges they share in supporting our wounded warriors. Sydney will host around 1000 family and friends who'll be in the stands cheering.

2018 United States Team

The Department of Defense announced the names of the 72 competitors who will compete on the 2018 Invictus Games, USA Team

Release No: NR-134-18 May 1, 2018
www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1510594/dod-announces-invictus-games-sydney-2018-team-members

More than 550 wounded, ill and injured servicemen and women from 18 allied nations are expected to compete.

Competitors will participate in 11 adaptive sports, including archery, athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, road cycling, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair



Left to right: Team U.S. members Air Force Master Sgt. Brian Williams, Marine Corps veteran Lance Cpl. Matthew Grashen, Army veteran Spc. Anthony Edward Pone and Marine Corps veteran Sgt. Anthony McDaniel attempt to block Netherlands player Jack Pastora's shot in the gold medal wheelchair basketball game during Invictus Games 2017. DoD photo by Roger L. Wollenberg

rugby, and a new addition this year, sailing - around the iconic Sydney Harbour.

"Participation in the 2018 Invictus Games helps to shine a light on the amazing power and positivity of adaptive sports and reconditioning activities for our wounded warriors, who continue to inspire us with their strength, resilience and personal courage every day," said Stephanie Barna, performing the duties of undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "These brave service members and veterans demonstrate what it means to be professional, dedicated, and determined. We are proud to honor and recognize their remarkable achievements and support them as they continue their personal journeys of recovery and healing." ★

The following athletes were selected as primaries for the USA Team:

Staff Sgt. Ross Alewine, U.S. Army
Retired, Gunnery Sgt. John Ayo, U.S. Marine Corps
Retired Cpl. Josue Barron, U.S. Marine Corps
Retired Senior Airman Jamie Biviano, U.S. Air Force
Retired Capt. Steven Bortle, U.S. Army
Master Sgt. Benjamin Brodt, U.S. SOC*
Spc. Vairon Caicedo U.S. SOC*
Retired Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian Canich, U.S. Navy
Retired Senior Airman Heather Carter, U.S. Air Force
Sgt. 1st Class Jarrid Collins U.S. SOC*
Sgt. David Crook, U.S. Army
Staff Sgt. James Dunaway, U.S. Marine Corps
Retired Petty Officer 3rd Class Mark Eldridge, U.S. Navy
Retired Chief Petty Officer Joshua Erickson, U.S. Navy
Retired Sgt. Brandi Evans, U.S. Army
Retired Tech. Sgt. Christopher Ferrell, U.S. Air Force
Retired Airman Austin Chance Field, U.S. Navy
Gunnery Sgt. Dorian Gardner, U.S. Marine Corps
Retired Petty Officer 3rd Class Jamie Garza, U.S. Navy
Retired Gunnery Sgt. Doug Godfrey, U.S. Marine Corps
Petty Officer 2nd Class Emmanuel Gonzalez, U.S. Navy
Retired Lance Cpl. Matthew Grashen, U.S. Marine Corps
Retired Sgt. Gabby Graves Wake, U.S. Marine Corps
Retired Staff Sgt. Megan Grudzinski, U.S. Army

...continued on page 20



Patrick Roberts, a medically retired Air Force technical sergeant, competes in the men's 100-meter dash for Team Socom, the U.S. Special Operations Command Invictus Games team, at York-Lions Stadium in Toronto, Canada, Sept. 25, 2017. DoD photo by Marine Corps Sgt. Cedric R. Haller II

...INVICTUS GAMES continued from page 19

Master Sgt. Kenneth Guinn, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Master Sgt. Shay Hampton, U.S. Air Force
 Maj. Lee Harvey, U.S. SOC*
 Retired Seaman Damion Headington, U.S. Navy
 Senior Chief Petty Officer Raina Hockenberry, U.S. Navy
 Capt. Brian Hotchkiss, U.S. SOC*
 Retired Capt. Lawrence Hufford, U.S. Air Force
 Petty Officer 2nd Class Mario Ingram, U.S. Navy
 Sgt. 1st Class Brandt Ireland, U.S. SOC*
 Master Sgt. Keith Jackson, U.S. SOC*
 Spc. Stephanie Johnson, U.S. Army
 Retired Staff Sgt. Michael Kacer, U.S. Army
 Staff Sgt. Altermese Kendrick, U.S. Army
 Master Sgt. Linn Knight, U.S. Air Force
 Lance Cpl. Kira Lavine, U.S. Marine Corps
 Retired Lt. Daniel Lee U.S. Coast Guard
 Retired Staff Sgt. Sebastiana Lopez, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Staff Sgt. Ryan Major, U.S. Army
 Retired Petty Officer 2nd Class Leroy Mccullough, U.S. Navy
 Sgt. Ryan Mcintosh, U.S. Army
 Retired Sgt. Maj. Shawn Mello, U.S. SOC*
 Retired Capt. Kristen Morris, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Sgt. Alex Nguyen U.S. Marine Corps
 1st Sgt. Douglas Norman, U.S. SOC*

1st Lt. Ryan Novack, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Master Sgt. Edward Oneil, U.S. SOC*
 Staff Sgt. Jason Pacheco, U.S. Marine Corps
 Gunnery Sgt. Alex Padilla, U.S. Marine Corps
 Sgt. 1st Class Dawn Page, U.S. SOC*
 Retired 1st Lt. Chris Parks U.S. Army
 Retired Staff Sgt. Tim Payne, U.S. Army
 Retired Tech. Sgt. Ryan Pinney, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Staff Sgt. Danielle Pothoof, U.S. Marine Corps
 Retired Master Sgt. Francis Reilly, U.S. SOC*
 Lt. Jason Roberts, U.S. Navy
 Retired Staff Sgt. Joel Rodriquez, U.S. Army
 Petty Officer 1st Class Tyson Schmidt, U.S. Navy
 Master Sgt. Benjamin Seekell, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Tech. Sgt. Joshua Smith, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Cpl. Michael Sousadecarma, U.S. Marine Corps
 Retired Senior Airman Hannah Stolberg, U.S. Air Force
 Retired Sgt. Jorge Toledo, U.S. Marine Corps
 Maj. Christina Truesdale, U.S. Army
 Retired Sgt. 1st Class Sualauvi Tuimalealiifano, U.S. SOC*
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COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (May 5, 2012) - Cpl. Justin Jones, two-time Warrior Games athlete veteran Joey Smith, and two-time Warrior Games athlete Lance Cpl. Lance Weir hoist the Chairman's Cup. The All-Marine earned 89 medals during the 2012 Warrior Games and won the Chairman's Cup for the third consecutive year. Photo by Patrick Onofre

Canine Companions for Independence Veterans Initiative



Lance Weir, Most Inspirational Athlete in 2017

Most Inspirational Athlete in 2017

Lance Weir is a C5 quadriplegic who truly does not let his disability slow him down.

Weir grew up in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, and was a walk-on football player at Arkansas State University. He joined the Marines as a reservist when the Gulf War began in 1990. He had planned on a career in the military after college, but those plans changed when he was injured in a diving accident near his home in 1993.

Trapped in a hospital bed with legs that no longer moved, despair had crept in. One day, a fly landed on the nose of a patient nearby. He was a young boy who was unable to make even the slightest movement to scare the fly away. In that moment, Weir decided he had no right to feel sorry for himself. More than 20 years later, the boy is still his motivation to move forward, to dream and to accomplish seemingly impossible things.

Service Dog Named Satine

In 2004, Weir was partnered with a Canine Companions for Independence service dog named Satine. Canine Companions assistance dogs are expertly-trained in over 40 commands when they are matched with their human partners following a two-week intensive training at a regional center. The nonprofit organization provides dogs free of charge to children, adults and veterans with disabilities.

After receiving Satine, Weir gained the confidence to return to school, earning two degrees before moving to California to work for Canine Companions. While he was with the organization, Weir helped create the Canine Companions for Independence Veterans Initiative. He was also honored as the Jack Warnock National Volunteer of the Year in 2012.

Satine helped renew Weir's passion for sports. He competed on the All-Marine Warrior Games Air Rifle & Pistol team in 2011 and 2012 and won two gold medals.

Outside of shooting, Weir cycled down the California coast a total of seven times with the help of the Challenged Athletes Foundation. He was recognized as Challenged Athletes Foundation's Most Inspirational Athlete in 2017. Weir also became the first C5 quadriplegic to enter an Ironman event.

On a typical day, Weir is out pursuing his dreams or inspiring others with disabilities to pursue theirs. He is now paired with his second service dog from Canine Companions, August, who usually goes by Auggie.



"I want to thank Canine Companions for Independence for what they have given me. They are the Marine Corps version of service dog organizations. Hands down a step above the rest," Weir said. "Working with my first dog Satine and my current dog Auggie has been life changing and an honor. Not only have they helped with my level of independence, they are also responsible for my reconnection to the Marine Corps." 🌟

To learn more about Canine Companions for Independence, visit <http://www.cci.org>



U.S. Marines (from left) Cpl. Angel Gomez and Lance Cpl. Lance Weir receive the silver and gold medals at the Shooting Finals at the 2011 Warrior Games at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. May 19, 2011. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Kayla M. Hermann)

The Military Health System

Veterans Initiative

Canine Companions Launches PTSD Pilot Program with the increase in military veterans returning with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Canine Companions is launching a pilot program to directly place service dogs with veterans with PTSD. The pilot program will take place at our Northwest Training Center in Santa Rosa, CA. For the purposes of this initial pilot program, local participants will be selected. Dogs will be trained in tasks including nightmare interruption, turning on lights, retrieving items, and supporting their handler in crowded public situations that might provoke anxiety for individuals with PTSD. In the future, we hope to expand this new placement type to include first responders with PTSD.

The criteria for participation in this small pilot program include living within 90-miles of Santa Rosa and veteran status. At this time, Canine Companions does not train dogs to work with individuals who desire support for PTSD outside of the context of the pilot program.

Canine Companions was the first assistance dog organization to be accredited by Assistance Dogs International, and has provided assistance dogs to over 5000 people with disabilities.

www.cci.org/assistance-dogs/Our-Dogs/veterans-initiative.html



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My life's Odyssey Began When I Met An energetic Service Dog Named Agatha

Story By Cpl. Matthew Raible, USMC (Ret.)

Severely wounded during the 1968 Tet Offensive

I am a disabled Vietnam veteran and I attribute much of my success throughout the past twenty-five years to three unique service dogs that were trained to assist me by Canine Companions for Independence. I joined the United States Marine Corps in July 1966. I served with the Third Battalion, Twenty-seventh Marines who were deployed to Vietnam in February 1968 to support the First Marine Division during the infamous 1968 Tet Offensive. On May 27th, 1968 I was severely wounded by fragments from an 81mm mortar while standing radio watch on Operation Allen Brook.

My wounds were extensive. I was hospitalized for physical rehabilitation at the Bronx VA Medical Center (VAMC). I struggled for nine long years to overcome the physical limitation of my paralysis and cope with my PTSD before I could live a relative independent lifestyle outside of the VA healthcare system. After I was released from the VA hospital, I sought the services of the Queens Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program to focus my lifestyle and become a productive member of society. It was here I was introduced to St. John's University. Once again, it would take me another nine long years to achieve a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science. Eventually I was hired by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and I retired from government service after a rewarding 18-years working as a Benefit Authorizer (BA).

My life's odyssey began when I met an energetic Service dog named Agatha. The service dog is taught a host of tasks that enable an individual who has a disability to perform their activities of daily living with a modicum of independence. As a consequence of the spinal cord injury, I lost most of the active function in my right hand and I relied upon Agatha to retrieve a pen, a sheet of paper of adaptive equipment that I may have dropped and give it to me so that



Cpl. Matthew Raible, USMC (Ret.) and Canine Companions Jason

I could complete an assignment and eventually graduate from St. John's University with a Magna Cum Laude degree.

These simple tasks actually saved my life. Upon returning from work, I parked my handicapped accessible van in the apartment complex parking lot on a frigid January night. Unbeknownst to me, I did not apply the brakes on my wheelchair and I fell between the driver's seat when I transitioned from the van's seat to my wheelchair. Besides this, I left the vehicle's remote control in the ignition switch along with the van keys. Without the remote control I could not open the passenger door and call for help. Agatha and I would be hypothermia victims that night if not for her help. Please bear in mind the dog is trained to pick up items lying on the floor. With some gentle persuasion she figured out how to get and give me the keys all by herself and gave the remote control to me. I opened the van's door and called for help. In 2002, Agatha received a citation called the "Award for Canine Excellence" from the American Kennel Club for her lifesaving action on the cold and dark January night.

Jason is my third successor dog; he is a yellow labrador/Golden Retriever mix.

Jason has an innate instinct of compassion that lets him know that I am not feeling well. He sits at my side during those moments, placing his head on my lap and looks at me with eyes brimming with unconditional love. He greets me every morning with a plethora of kisses and lies by my bedside at night. I feel secure with Jason by my side.

The benefits of having a Canine Companions assistance dog are too numerous to mention here. I am truly blessed to have had these special dogs in my life. 🐾

Cpl. Matthew Raible, USMC (Ret.)



Canine Companions for Independence® enhances the lives of people with disabilities the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs.



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Canine Companions for Independence®

Founded in 1975, Canine Companions for Independence® is a non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships.

The assistance dogs we breed, raise and train aren't just the ears, hands and legs of their human partners. They're also goodwill ambassadors and often, their best friends. They open up new opportunities and new possibilities, and spread incredible joy. We unite people with dogs in a powerful program that leads to greater independence and confidence.

Canine Companions for Independence train four types of assistance dogs

Service dogs

Service dogs assist adults with physical disabilities by performing daily tasks.

"Mork helps me help myself. He can retrieve my phone and other dropped items, pull my wheelchair and open doors for me."

—Wallis and Service Dog Mork

...continued on page 26



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...Canine Companions continued from page 25

Hearing dogs

Hearing dogs alert their partners, who are deaf and hard of hearing, to important sounds.

"Thanks to Hazel, I don't have to rely on someone to wake me up. I am less dependent on my family now."

—Karen and Hearing Dog Hazel

Facility dogs

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"Sherlock allows many children to surprise themselves into doing things they might never have had the courage to try!"

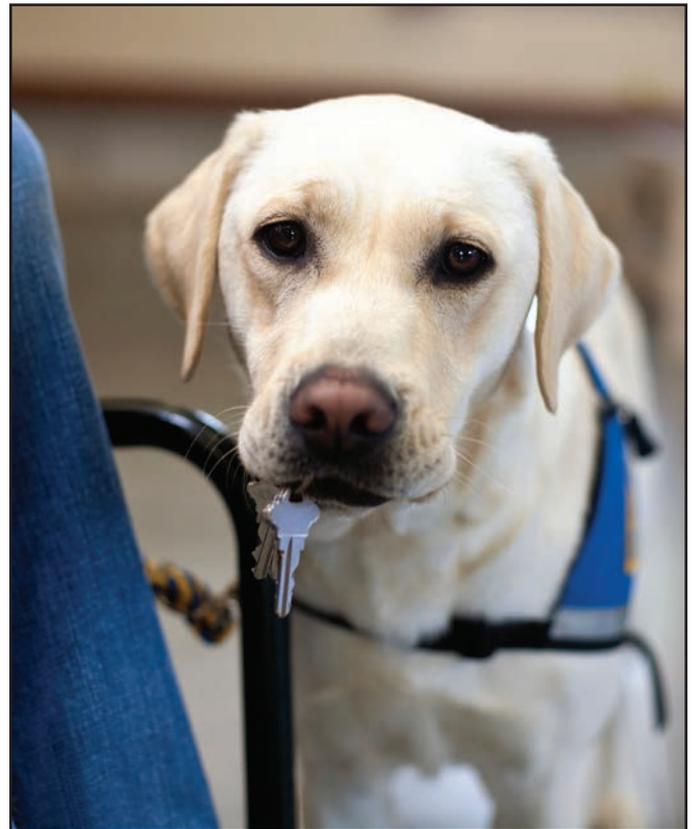
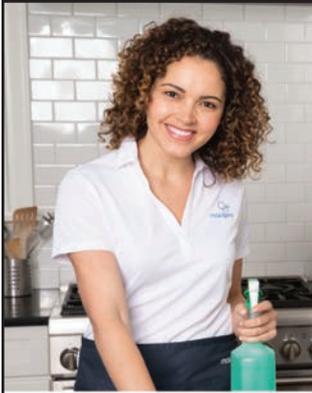
—Kristen and Facility Dog Sherlock

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—Carter and Skilled Companion Hollen


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Professional Canine Companions instructors teach the dogs to master over 40 commands in six to nine months. After training is successfully completed, the dogs can go through Team Training and be matched with adults, children or veterans with a disabilities, or professionals assisting clients with special needs. Team Training culminates in a joyful graduation ceremony for graduates beginning a new journey and for puppy raisers witnessing their puppies' achievements. 🌟

National Headquarters & Locations

Northwest Training Center

Jean and Charles Schulz Campus

2965 Dutton Avenue • Santa Rosa, CA 95407

(707) 577-1700 Voice

(707) 577-1712 Fax

(800) 572-BARK (2275) Toll-free

Serving Northern California, Northern Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska and Wyoming.

Canine Companions for Independence was founded in Santa Rosa, California in 1975. The **National Headquarters and Northwest Training Center are located on the Jean and Charles Schulz Campus in Santa Rosa, California.** The Schulz Campus, named after generous supporters Jean and Charles Schulz, opened in 1996. The Northwest Region serves people in Northern California, Northern Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Alaska.

Southwest Training Center

The Dean, Gerda and Trixie Koontz Campus

124 Rancho del Oro Drive • Oceanside, CA 92057

(760) 901-4300 Voice

(760) 901-4350 Fax

(800) 572-BARK (2275) Toll-free

The Southwest Region of Canine Companions was founded in 1986. We serve Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Southern California, Southern Nevada and Hawaii. The Southwest Regional Training Center is named the Dean, Gerda and Trixie Koontz Campus after our campus benefactors: bestselling author Dean Koontz, his wife and their late Golden Retriever adopted from Canine Companions after being retired from service.



North Central Training Center

4989 State Route 37 East • Delaware, Ohio 43015

(740) 833-3700 Voice

(740) 363-0555 Fax

(800) 572-BARK (2275) Toll-free

Canine Companions for Independence North Central Region has been enhancing the lives of children, adults and veterans with disabilities since 1987. The North Central Regional Training Center, located just outside of Columbus in Delaware, OH, opened its doors in 1990 and serves 13 and a half states: everything west of Pittsburgh, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The North Central Region also serves our graduate teams living in eastern Canada.

South Central Training Center

Kinkeade Campus at Baylor Scott & White Health

7710 Las Colinas Ridge • Irving, TX 75063

(214) 259-4700 Voice

(800) 572-BARK (2275) Toll-free

Canine Companions for Independence South Central Region is the sixth and newest region. The Kinkeade Campus at Baylor Scott & White Health is located in Irving, Texas, and is the first assistance dog program to partner with a healthcare system. The campus is named for United States District Judge Ed Kinkeade, who took the lead in bringing this partnership together for the formation of a campus to serve the state of Texas. We look forward to continuing to enhance lives through our wonderful assistance dogs in the Lone Star State.

Northeast Training Center

Miller Family Campus

286 Middle Island Road • Medford, NY 11763

(631) 561-0200 Voice

(631) 561-0230 Fax

(800) 572-BARK (2275) Toll-free

The Northeast Region of Canine Companions for Independence was founded in 1989 and was located on the SUNY Farmingdale Campus in Farmingdale, NY.

In 2008, the Northeast Regional Training Center moved to a state-of-the-art facility, the Miller Family Campus located in Medford, NY. The 11-acre, 39,000 square foot Canine Care Center features 38 kennels, exercise yards, a wellness clinic and grooming facility, along with separate kennels and play yards for puppies. The Hagedorn Team Training Residence Hall has 11 spacious fully handicapped accessible dorm rooms for training participants and their families. Bogie's Bistro provides a community space with an accessible kitchen, dining room and lounge. There are five training rooms that are utilized for Team Training, professional training, puppy classes, as well as community meetings. Serving New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia, West Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

...continued on page 28

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...Canine Companions continued from page 27

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Canine Companions for Independence**
8150 Clarcona Ocoee Road • Orlando, FL 32818
(407) 522-3300 Voice
(407) 522-3347 Fax
(800) 572-BARK (2275) Toll-free

The Southeast Region of Canine Companions for Independence has been making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities since 1989. The Southeast Region Training Center, an 8-acre campus, opened on Independence Day, July 4, 2000, and serves the states of Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. The campus, named in recognition of Anheuser-Busch/SeaWorld's million dollar gift, consists of four buildings with a total of 32,000 square feet. It is a state-of-the-art facility where training, education and caring come together.

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National Veterans Creative Arts Competition & Festival

Grand Finale Stage Show and Art and Writing Exhibitions

www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/national-veterans-creative-arts-festival/

2018 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

Presented by:

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Hosted by:

A Central Iowa Health Care System

Dates:

Thursday, November 1, 2018

Art Exhibit and Creative Writers Meet & Greet

Sunday, November 4, 2018, Stage Show

Location: Des Moines, IA

Tickets are not required to attend the Thursday, events, but a ticket is required to attend the Stage Show.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) is the 2018, celebration and grand finale stage show and art and writing exhibitions which are the culmination of talent competitions in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music for Veterans treated in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national health care system.

Veterans will exhibit their artwork and original writings or perform musical, dance or dramatic selections in a gala variety show. All Veterans invited to participate are selected winners of year-long, national fine arts talent competitions in which thousands of Veterans enter, from VA medical facilities across the nation.

VA medical facilities incorporate creative arts into their recreation therapy programs to further the rehabilitation milieu for both inpatients and outpatients. This annual competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through that therapy, and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our Nation's Veterans after disease, disability or life crisis.

History Of The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival originated as two separate competitions. Muriel Barbour, then chief of recreation therapy at the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Va., created the visual arts competition, VET ARTS, in 1981, as an observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons. Shirley Jefferies, a recreation therapist at the Waco, Texas, VA Medical Center, initiated the performing arts competition, The National Music Competition for Veterans, in 1981. The premier live winners' stage show was held in 1981 at the VA Medical Center in Tuskegee, Ala. The second show was staged in 1982 at the Coatesville, Pa., VA Medical Center.

U.S. Air Force photo by
Airman 1st Class George Goslin



In 1984, the live stage show was presented in Washington, D.C., and the music competition was renamed "The Music Festival." The following year, the stage show took place in historic Constitution Hall.

The Music Festival and VET ARTS merged and drama and dance divisions were added, to create the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in 1989. Designed to spotlight the four creative arts therapies of art, music, dance and drama, this landmark Festival was performed to an audience of 4,000 in the Fox Theater in St. Louis, Mo. In 2005, a fifth creative arts division, creative writing, was added to the Festival roster.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival continues to evolve each year as it showcases the artistic achievements of Veterans from across the country in each of the five artistic divisions. Each Festival features an art exhibit showing the first place artwork from 51 categories. A live stage show, complete with orchestral accompaniment generously provided by the Music Performance Fund, is performed by Veterans who have achieved medal-winning status in a variety of categories from the performing arts divisions of music, drama and dance, as well as creative writing.

Workshops are offered during the Festival week for participants and staff, educating them in a variety of artistic modalities by utilizing the talents of local community artists. There is no competition at the Festival itself, as it is a showcase for previously judged medal winners.

In 2016, 3,251 Veterans from 126 VA medical facilities entered the art, music, drama, dance and creative writing competitions. Of those, approximately 130 medal-winning Veterans earned an invitation to participate in the 2016 Festival in Jackson, Mississippi. In 2017 the VA Western New York Healthcare System hosted the event in Buffalo, New York.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival is supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs, American Legion Auxiliary and many other organizations both locally and nationally.

2019 Local Competition Begins

Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Across the country each year, Veterans enrolled at VA health care facilities compete in a local creative arts competition. The competition includes 51 categories in the visual arts division this year that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In

...continued on page 30

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... Creative Arts Competition continued from page 29

In addition, there are categories in creative writing, dance, drama and music. Through a national judging process, first, second and third place entries in each category are determined.

Most VA facilities hold their local competitions in January and February. Be sure to check with your VA facility as early as December in order to meet their deadline date for submission of entries into the local competition. Veterans must work with a staff person from the VA facility where they are enrolled.

Competition Eligibility Criteria

This competition is open to Veterans who are enrolled at a VA Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic BEFORE entering the local competition. An eligible Veteran can enter local competition at only one VA facility per year.

He/she can submit an entry in creative writing, dance, drama or music categories with a Veteran or group from another VA facility, but still represents and must go through his/her originating VA facility to enter the competition.

This facility should be the site where he/she receives their primary treatment.

The Military Health System

Healing Arts

Healing arts initiatives promote creative expression through art, music, writing, dance, and other artistic modalities to help Service members and Veterans express themselves in new ways and improve their quality of life—psychologically, physically, and spiritually. Individuals with opportunities to express themselves and share their stories can often better cope with the most common symptoms of today's conflicts: post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and depression.

Art, more specifically, offers a nonverbal outlet of expression where many Service members find their art to become an extension of themselves and their thoughts. This open creativity allows them to process traumatic experiences from their past and also navigate the visible and/or invisible challenges they face every day, to foster post-traumatic growth and healing.

DoD works with organizations like the **National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE)**, a directorate of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, which helps Service members and their families better manage their traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health (PH) conditions. The NICoE delivers a broad range of patient- and family-centered assessments and clinical offerings, encompassing traditional medicine, advanced diagnostic techniques, and integrative medicine. Creative Arts Therapy, a NICoE Outpatient Service, is comprised of the NICoE Healing Arts Program.

<http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/carecoordination/masp/healingarts/>



Mortgage Payment May Sound Too Good To Be True



“Warning Order” To Servicemembers And Veterans

CFPB and VA are issuing their first WARNO, “Warning Order”

By Patrick Campbell and Anthony Vail – NOV 20, 2017

www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/cfpb-and-va-warno-va-refinancing-offers-sound-too-good-be-true

www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/irrrl.asp

The CFPB and VA are issuing their first WARNO, “Warning Order,” to servicemembers and veterans with VA home loans. If you have a VA home loan, then there is a good chance that you have already come into contact with unsolicited offers to refinance your mortgage that appear official and may sound too good to be true.

Many of these solicitations promise:

- **Extremely low interest rates**
- **Thousands of dollars in cash back**
- **Skipped mortgage payments**
- **No out-of-pocket costs**
- **No waiting period**

Don't be fooled. Before responding to any unsolicited offers, here is what you need to know.

A - Operational environment

Some lenders marketing VA mortgage refinances may use aggressive and potentially misleading advertising and sales tactics. Lenders may advertise a rate just to get you to respond, or you may receive a VA mortgage refinance

offer that provides limited benefit to you while adding thousands of dollars to your loan balance.

How will you know if the offer is too good to be true? Here are some offers and tactics to watch out for:

Offers to skip one or two mortgage payments – Lenders sometimes advertise this as a benefit of a VA mortgage refinance; in fact, VA prohibits a lender from advertising the skipping of payments as a means of obtaining cash in an Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRRL). Certain lenders nevertheless use this as a selling point when they are unable to offer cash-out or a significantly lower interest rate.

Offers to receive an escrow refund – Lenders may promise that you will receive a certain amount of cash as a refund from your escrow account; however, the amount you may receive is dependent on how much is left in your account at the time the loan closes, which may be much less than you were promised. We have heard from

...continued on page 32

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...Warning Order continued from page 31

servicemembers who were promised a certain refund amount and received a much lower amount at closing. We have also heard from servicemembers who have experienced problems with their new escrow accounts after closing and have had to make higher monthly payments to make up for the shortfall.

Low-interest rates without specific terms – Lenders may advertise a low-interest rate to get you to respond to an advertisement. You might assume these rates are for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage, but in many cases, the rates are for a 15-year fixed-rate mortgage or an adjustable-rate mortgage, or you may have to pay discount points to receive the advertised rate.

Aggressive sales tactics – Certain lenders may try to push you into a VA mortgage refinance. For example, you may be called by a lender multiple times or receive VA mortgage refinance offers in the mail that look like a check or bill to get you to open it. You may be pressured to refinance your VA loan only a month or two after you closed on your current VA loan.

Be prepared to: Understand that certain advertised benefits, such as no out-of-pocket closing costs, skipped mortgage payments, and escrow refunds, are costs that are generally added to your loan and increase the overall principal balance. These are all red flags that may indicate that the loan is less likely to benefit you. Before you proceed with a VA mortgage refinance, be sure to consider the long-term and short-term benefits and consequences of refinancing your loan.

B - Friendly forces

We are working hard, along with other government agencies, to identify, stop, and prevent illegal and misleading advertising related to VA mortgages and refinancing.

If you are considering mortgage or refinancing through a VA loan, VA loan specialists are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, to assist you. If you have questions about your current VA loan, contact VA at (877) 827-3702.

If you have a problem with a VA mortgage refinance or other mortgage issues, you can submit a complaint to the CFPB online or by calling (855) 411-CFPB (2372).

If you would like to stop or reduce the amount of the offers you receive, you can call 888-567-8688 or visit www.optoutprescreen.com.

You can also put your phone number on the federal government's National Do Not Call Registry to reduce the telemarketing calls you get at home.

Visit www.donotcall.gov or call 888-382-1222 from the phone number you want to register.

Whether you're thinking of buying a home, already have a home loan, or are having trouble paying your mortgage, the CFPB has mortgage resources to help you every step of the way. If you currently have a VA loan and are having issues repaying your mortgage, you should call a VA loan technician at (877) 827-3702 to explore potential options that can assist you. ☺

PREDATORY LENDING

Information You Can Use

VA ISSUES NEW POLICY TO PROTECT VETERAN HOMEOWNERS FROM PREDATORY LENDING

June 15, 2018

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4073

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has issued a new policy implementing the May 2018 Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, to protect Veteran homeowners from predatory lending practices when obtaining a VA-guaranteed refinance loan.

The act helps protect Veterans and service members from the dangers associated with repeatedly refinancing their home loans, requiring, among other things, the seasoning of the original loan and a recoupment period for fees, closing costs, and expenses related to the refinance.

“We want to ensure Veterans have the informed ability to take advantage of economic opportunities and make sound decisions that enable them to prosper when using their benefits,” said Acting VA Secretary Peter O’Rourke. “This is yet another tool that will help Veterans meet their personal goals.”

The act also provides for a specified interest rate decrease and for protections of loan-to-value ratios.

A refinancing loan must meet the requirements specified in the act or VA will not guarantee the loan.

VA recently implemented a policy where lenders provide Veteran borrowers a comparison of their existing VA-backed home loan to the proposed one when refinancing to ensure borrowers are set up for success. This is also referred to as a recoupment or



break-even analysis, which helps Veteran borrowers clearly understand the costs of refinancing, the monthly payment savings, and the overall impact on their finances.

VA-backed home loans generally do not require a down payment, have low closing costs, and are the lowest rates among all loan products in the marketplace. Notably, VA-backed home loans also continue to outperform other products in the market. In fiscal year (FY) 2017, VA guaranteed more than 740,000 loans for a total of \$189 billion, an all-time record for the VA Home Loan Program. Over the past three years, VA has guaranteed more than 2 million VA home loans for over \$500 billion.

The VA Home Loan Program’s mission is to maximize Veterans’ and service members’ opportunity to obtain, retain, and adapt homes by providing a viable and fiscally responsible benefit program in recognition of their service to the nation. In addition, VA also helps severely disabled Veterans adapt their homes to live more independently by providing up to \$81,080 for home modifications. For more information, including eligibility criteria, visit Housing Grants for Disabled Veterans. www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp

Policy Guidance Update: VA Refinance Loans and the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act • Circular 26-18-13, May 25, 2018.

www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/documents/circulars/26_18_13.pdf

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Federal Trade Commission Consumer Information

FTC Takes Action against the Operators of Copycat Military Websites

Press Release, September 6, 2018 • <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2018/09/ftc-takes-action-against-operators-copycat-military-websites>

Note: A conference call for media with Joe Simons, Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission and Andrew Smith, Director of the FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection, will occur on September 6, 2018

Call-in lines, were open for media only with FTC staff available to take questions from the media.

The operators of copycat websites army.com and navyenlist.com have agreed to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that they targeted people seeking to join the armed forces and tricked them by falsely claiming to be affiliated with the military in order to generate sales leads for post-secondary schools.

The defendants, including the Alabama-based companies Sunkey Publishing, Inc. and Fanmail.com, LLC, have agreed to relinquish army.com, armyenlist.com and other domain names, and to stop the practices that they allegedly used to deceive consumers.

“Those who are considering a military career deserve to have confidence that the recruitment site is legitimate and their personal information will not be misused,” said FTC Chairman Joe Simons. “The FTC will take action against any party in the lead generation ecosystem – from sellers to purchasers – that fails to comply with the law.”

According to the FTC’s complaint, which was filed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) on behalf of the Commission,

the defendants have used copycat military recruitment websites since at least 2010. Some of the websites, such as army.com and armyenlist.com, appeared to be official recruiting websites affiliated with the U.S. military.

The websites prompted consumers to submit their information to learn more about joining the armed forces, according to the FTC. The complaint alleges that the defendants promised to use the information consumers submitted to the site only for military recruitment purposes and not to share it with anyone else.

Instead, the FTC charged that the defendants sold the information as marketing leads to post-secondary schools for \$15 to \$40 per lead.

In addition, people who submitted their information allegedly received follow-up phone calls from telemarketers who continued the misrepresentations by posing as members of the military, touting specific schools, and giving consumers the false impression that the U.S. military actually endorsed those schools.

This action is part of the FTC’s effort to combat government imposter schemes, the most frequent type of fraud complaint from military consumers in the FTC’s Consumer Sentinel database. It also builds on the agency’s work in the area of lead generation, including its examination of various players involved.

The FTC charged the defendants with violating the FTC Act and the FTC's Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR). The agency also alleged that they violated the Do Not Call provisions of the TSR by placing hundreds of thousands of illegal telemarketing calls to phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry and by failing to pay required fees.

The two proposed orders settling the FTC's charges require the defendants to turn over to the FTC websites used to deceive consumers, including army.com and armyenlist.com.

Turnover of these websites partially satisfies the civil penalty judgments of \$11.1 million against Sunkey and \$1 million against Fanmail. The judgments are otherwise suspended due to defendants' inability to pay; however, if the defendants are later found to have misrepresented their financial condition to the FTC, the full amount of the penalty would become due.

The proposed orders also ban the defendants from misrepresenting a military affiliation, the endorsement of particular schools by the military, or the extent to which they share consumers' personal information. They require the defendants to disclose that their sites are not official recruiting websites of the U.S. military, to solicit consumers' acknowledgement of that fact, and to get permission to disclose consumer information collected in connection with lead generation for any purpose. The defendants also must notify the companies that bought consumer data from the defendants of the FTC's allegations and instruct the companies to stop using the information.

The first proposed order settles the FTC's charges against Sunkey Publishing Inc.; Sun Key Publishing, LLC; Wheredata, LLC; and Christopher Upp, individually and as an officer of the corporate defendants; and Mark Van Dyke, individually and as an officer of the corporate defendants. The second proposed order settles the FTC's charges against Fanmail.com, LLC; and Lon Brolliar and Andrew Dorman, individually and as officers of Fanmail.com, LLC.

The FTC has education material to help consumers avoid trouble from imposters and to safeguard their personal information:

Before you fill out forms or applications on a site, find out more about who is actually requesting your information

...continued on page 36

D

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...Copycat Military Websites continued from page 35 and for what purpose by doing an online search for the site operator with words like "complaint" or "review."

If you think you have gotten a call from a government imposter, report it to the FTC at FTC.gov/complaint.

If you're interested in information on military recruitment, please visit this site from the Department of Defense for more information.

<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/contact-a-recruiter>

CONTACT A RECRUITER

Today's Military needs candidates with the right abilities and a real desire to join. A military recruiter can help answer questions about service, providing a positive but realistic assessment of opportunities. Recruiters from multiple Service branches may share a location, and young adults should feel encouraged to speak to more than one. Parents should also feel comfortable talking to recruiters. It is a recruiter's job to address concerns and provide good information to both those interested in serving and those close to them.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A MILITARY RECRUITERS

Once a young adult has expressed interest in the Service, a visit to a recruiter is a good next step.

A recruiter's job is to find qualified candidates for his or her respective Service and provide the candidates with information about – and reasons for – joining the Military.

Meeting with a recruiter does not obligate an individual to serve; it's simply a chance to ask questions and get honest answers. You can expect a recruiter to talk about opportunities in his or her Service in positive but realistic terms.

Potential recruits can and should talk to recruiters from multiple branches to compare opportunities.

Don't be surprised if a recruiter wants to talk to both child and parents together. Recruiters have seen the important role family support can play in the decision to enlist, and they encourage everyone to be informed.

<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/contact-a-recruiter>

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Seeing Through Imposter Scams

Imposters pretend to be someone you trust, like a government official, a family member, a charity, or a company you do business with. They seem convincing, and pressure you to send money before you have time to think.

Tips

Don't send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request — whether it comes as a text, a phone call, or an email.

Scammers can be convincing and find ways to make their story seem real. They sometimes use information from social networking sites to convince you they know about you. They might hack into a loved one's email account to seem like it's really the person you know reaching out.

Is a distressed friend or love interest in touch? Check it out. Look up that person's phone number yourself and check in. Call another family member to see what they know. Is there a real emergency?

Does it seem to be the IRS calling? Hang up. The IRS will never contact you initially by phone. The real IRS won't ask you to pay with prepaid debit cards, iTunes cards, or wire transfers. They also won't ask for a credit card over the phone. If you have tax questions, visit IRS.gov or call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

Does a caller say you've been selected to get a grant or other money from the government? Even if you've recently completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a real government agency won't ask you to pay a processing fee related to FAFSA or for a grant that you have already been awarded.

Does the caller say your computer has a virus and they can help? Hang up. Never give control of your computer or your credit card information to someone who calls you out of the blue.

Is your online romantic interest asking for cash? Don't wire money or give out account information. Scammers, both male and female, make fake dating profiles, sometimes using photos of other people — even stolen pictures of real military personnel. They build relationships — some even fake wedding plans — before they disappear with your money.

www.militaryconsumer.gov/protect/best-practices-empowered-consumers/seeing-through-imposter-scams

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<https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc>

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Choosing A College or Technical School

You don't have the time or money to waste on education or training that won't help you meet your goals.

Not all schools deliver on their promises, and some care more about their own bottom line than getting you qualified for a career.

Tips

- First, research what you want to do for a living.
- What are the average salaries and education needed?
- What kind of school offers the degree or certification you need?

Use the Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill Comparison Tool to research the schools that offer what you need. www.vets.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool

Look for:

The graduation rate.

How many students are successfully completing programs at those schools?

The cost.

The benefits calculator can tell you how much your benefits will cover.

The loan default rate.

Look up the share of students who have paid some of their debt within three years of leaving school.

A high default rate could mean graduates have too much debt or they can't get jobs in their field. Either is a warning sign to look elsewhere for your degree.

How much money you could make.

The outcomes section will show the typical salary for graduates of this school 10 years after they first enroll.

The school's accreditation.

- The summary section can tell you whether a school has national or regional accreditation.
- Accreditation can affect your ability to transfer credits from that school to another one.
- Regional accreditation is often more beneficial to you; some institutions may not accept credit from a school with national accreditation.

The Department of Education's College Navigator

can tell you whether a school is a non-profit or for profit. Unlike non-profit educational institutions, for-profits generate earnings for their owners. Some schools may stretch the truth to persuade you to enroll.

Get some real-life experience

with the school you're considering.

Sit in on some classes.

Are the students engaged?

Talk to student veterans and recent graduates.

What do they think of the school?

Did the school help them reach their goals?

Student Veterans of America (SVA)

can connect you to veterans through their local chapters. They can give first-hand feedback on a school's track record for supporting veterans.

Check the GI Bill Comparison Tool to find an SVA chapter at a school. <http://studentveterans.org/>

You might be able to get credit for your military training.

Ask the school if they take credits from these programs. The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) for the military has tests you can take for college credit.

The American Council on Education lets you search for the military training you've had, and see if you can get college credit for it.

<https://clep.collegeboard.org/earn-college-credit/military-benefits>

Call the Registrar

of the school you're interested in transferring to and the department for the subject you want to study there. Re-confirm that your college credits will transfer. That's your best guide to whether your coursework will get you where you want to be.

Read the school's enrollment contract

before you commit. Get the documents a few days before signing so you can review.

If they won't give them to you in advance, don't enroll.

Is every thing they promised written into the contract?

If not, it's not binding.

www.militaryconsumer.gov/earn/finding-and-paying-school/choosing-college-or-technical-school



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Post-9/11 GI Bill



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PENTAGON ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO POST-9/11 GI BILL

News Release No: NR-217-18 , July 12, 2018
www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/1573168/pentagon-announces-changes-to-post-911-gi-bill/

The Department of Defense issued a substantive change today to department policy on the transfer by service members in the Uniformed Services of "Post-9/11 GI Bill" educational benefits to eligible family member recipients.

Effective one-year from the date of this change, eligibility to transfer those benefits will be limited to service members with less than 16 years of total service (active duty service and/or selected reserves as applicable). Previously, there were no restrictions on when a service member could transfer educational benefits to their family members. The provision that requires a service member to have at least six years of service to apply to transfer benefits remains unchanged in the policy.

Focus on Retention

"After a thorough review of the policy, we saw a need to focus on retention in a time of increased growth of the Armed Forces," said Stephanie Miller, director of Accessions Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense. "This change continues to allow career service members that earned this benefit to share it with their family members while they continue to serve." She added "this change is an important step to preserve the distinction of transferability as a retention incentive."

If a service member fails to fulfill their service obligation because of a "force shaping" event (such as officers involuntarily separated as a result of being twice passed over for promotion, or enlisted personnel involuntarily separated as a result of failure to meet minimum retention standards, such as high-year tenure), the change will allow these individuals to retain their eligibility to transfer education benefits even if they haven't served the entirety of their obligated service commitment through no fault of their own.

All approvals for transferability of Post-9/11 GI bill continue to require a four-year commitment in the Armed Forces and, more importantly, the member must be eligible to be retained for 4 years from the date of election.

This policy affects service members in the Uniformed Services which includes the U.S. Coast Guard as well as the commissioned members of the U.S. Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For more on the policy, visit <http://www.esd.whs.mil/DD>

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On December 31, 2018, the U.S. Department of Defense's **TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP)** will end.

You can enroll in dental coverage for next year, effective January 1, 2019, but it will be offered under a different program, the **Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)**, sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

You don't need to take action now. But, to prevent a gap in dental coverage when your TRDP plan ends, you must select and enroll in a FEDVIP dental plan during the next Federal Benefits Open Season. Open season is your annual opportunity to sign up for FEDVIP dental and vision coverage, and this year it runs from November 12, 2018, to December 10, 2018. The coverage effective date is January 1, 2019.

Previously, FEDVIP was only available to Federal and U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employees, retirees, and their eligible family members, but eligibility for the program has expanded. Both FEDVIP dental and vision coverage will now be offered to certain retired members of the uniformed services and their families. In addition, FEDVIP vision coverage will also be offered to most family members of active duty service men and women.

FEDVIP is popular among Federal employees. The more than 3.3 million people already enrolled give the program high marks for quality and value. With 10 dental and four vision carriers to choose from, and both standard and high plan options, we're happy to say that FEDVIP offers many benefit plans and options, which will provide great flexibility to members of the uniformed services.



Key Dates To Remember

**October 2018
2019 FEDVIP plan
rates are available**

**Nov. 12–Dec. 10, 2018
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Open Season
for FEDVIP**

**Jan. 1, 2019
2019 FEDVIP
plan year begins**

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- MetLife
- Triple-S Salud
- United Concordia Dental

FEDVIP vision plans

- Aetna Vision
- FEP BlueVision
- UnitedHealthcare Vision
- Vision Service Plan (VSP)

Note: Plan details and rates for the 2019 plan year will be available in fall 2018.

If you are eligible, you can start enrolling in FEDVIP in November 2018. Coverage will start Jan. 1, 2019.

For more information, visit TRICARE.benefeds.com.



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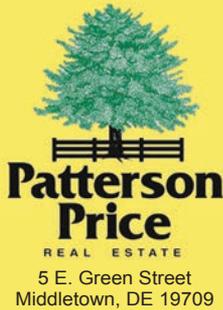


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U.S. Air Force Dress and Personal Appearance

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs /
 Published July 16, 2018

www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1576102/air-force-updates-to-afi-36-2903-dress-and-personal-appearance/

The Air Force announced a series of uniform updates to Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel, effective July 13, 2018.

"These changes stemmed from the 100th Air Force Uniform Board, which incorporated direct feedback from Airmen," said Lt. Gen. Gina Grosso, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel, and Services.

"There are additional Uniform Board initiatives that are ongoing and still being analyzed for consideration and implementation by senior leaders."

The notable changes are, but not limited to:

Grooming and Appearance Standards

- No minimum hair length for females, but up to a maximum bulk of three-and-half inches from scalp, allowing for proper wear of headgear.
- Females are also authorized locs, which must be lightly fused or interwoven to present a neat, professional appearance.

Dress Uniform

- All enlisted personnel may wear three-and-a-half inch or four-inch chevrons.
- All or some ribbons and devices may be worn on service dress uniform.
- All, some or no ribbons and devices may be worn on blue service uniform.

Outer Garments

- Headgear, Rank Insignia and Accessories
- While off duty in civilian clothes males are authorized to wear earrings on or off installation.





- Females are authorized to wear round or square white diamond, gold, white pearl or silver earrings as a set with any uniform combination.
- Eyeglasses and sunglasses may have a small logo that can contrast with frame color or lenses. Conservative, clear, slightly tinted or photosensitive lenses are also authorized.
- Airmen may wear either a sling style backpack or two strap backpack.
- Handbags for all uniform combinations will be solid black leather or vinyl without ornamentation with black or white stitching.

Physical Training Gear

- Short- and long-sleeved solid white, black or light gray form fitting undershirts may be worn and visible under the short-sleeved shirt.
- A balaclava (black) may now be worn with PT gear while performing physical fitness activities outdoors.

For the complete list of changes, Airmen should go to:
http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2903/afi36-2903.pdf

Starting Oct. 1, 2018

Air Force leaders announced the service will move to a single combat utility uniform, adopting the Operational Camouflage Pattern, or OCP, already in use by the Army and Airmen in combat zones and in certain jobs across the Air Force.

Starting Oct. 1, 2018, Airmen who have serviceable OCPs may wear the uniform, and Airmen can purchase OCPs at Army and Air Force Exchange Services at the following locations: Aviano Air Base, Italy; Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina; Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina; and MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

These initial locations will allow uniform manufacturers to produce additional stocks for other locations, eventually outfitting the total force in the coming months.

The service will fully transition to OCPs by April 1, 2021.

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Top Ten Reasons To Visit Downtown Dover

10. Great Location

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9. Tax Free Shopping

Need we say more?

8. A Supporting Downtown Business Organization

Downtown Dover Partnership offers a wide array of programs designed to assist start-ups, expansions and mature business.

7. Diverse Customer Base

Downtown businesses currently draw from a wide range of potential customers.

6. Major Visitor Attractions Draw Tourist Year-Round

Downtown Dover is home to six museums, a visitor's center, the public archives, and significant historic sites. The site where Delaware's delegates voted to ratify the U.S. Constitution sits right in the heart of the historic district!

5. An Emerging Entertainment & Cultural Arts Center

Dover is becoming an entertainment and cultural destination. Downtown initiatives like the renovation of the historic Capitol Theater and the Dover Art League serves as magnets to attract additional patrons to the district.

4. Business Smarts for the Future

High Speed Internet access through a variety of sources available throughout Downtown Dover.

3. Outstanding Special Events in a Beautiful Historic Setting

Dover is known for its rich history, beautiful architecture and colorful flower gardens. We are a community that recognizes the value of preserving our past. A close knit community, the citizens of Dover work through hundreds of volunteer organizations to keep our community healthy. Community events that bring people downtown can be found most every weekend of the year. Dover also plays host twice a year to NASCAR races and has a "First Night Celebration" throughout the downtown district during the holiday season.

2. Business Friendly Environment

New business start-ups can happen easier and faster in Dover. Why? Every place you need to register and license your business is practically within walking distance of downtown. If you are incorporating your business you'll be glad to know that the world-renowned Delaware Division of Corporations sits right in the heart of Downtown Dover.

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