

AT EASE!

The Monthly Newsletter of MassVetsAdvisor.org

Volume 2 - Issue 4 - December 2013

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Mass VetsAdvisor

SERVICE OF THE MONTH

RALLYPOINT

RallyPoint uses patent-pending technology to revolutionize the way U.S. Military Servicemembers connect, develop, and pursue fulfilling career opportunities. Tagged as "The Military's Professional Network," RallyPoint was created by Veterans at Harvard Business School and seeks to connect their members and give "them the best tools possible to succeed both while in the military, and beyond."

To view the full site, you must verify your military identity by confirming you have a '.mil' email address. To join, visit www.rallypoint.com.

Year in Review

As 2013 comes to a close, we wanted to share with our readers a year in review to keep you updated on what is happening with MassVetsAdvisor. This year has been an exciting and busy year for the staff here at MassVetsAdvisor. Throughout the year, we attended 78 Veteran events across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These events ranged from road races, such as the Bedford VA Veterans Day Fun Run and the Home Base Program's Run to Home Base, to fairs such as the Big E in West Springfield, and to events that remember the fallen, such as the Gold Star Tree dedication at the State House. All along the way, we have been meeting with Veterans and their families to urge them to visit MassVetsAdvisor.org to access the benefits and services they are eligible for and deserve.

In February, we had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to participate in a panel discussion at the headquarters of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) where we discussed the importance of making Veteran benefits accessible and easy to

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navigate for Veterans and their families. While in D.C., we also had the opportunity to present the website to the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation and staff from a number of other Congressional offices, such as the Armed Forces Committee. Locally, we testified in front of the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs in March.

Also in March, we were pleased to join former Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray at the Norwood Town Hall where he announced that all state agencies that oversee professional licensing within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had established guidelines to assist current members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and their spouses as they apply for jobs in Massachusetts. This achievement was a result of the VALOR Act of 2012 and it ensures that those who have served in the military have a streamlined and efficient process through which to obtain appropriate licensure for jobs.

In February, we partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to produce an LED billboard that promotes the website. The billboards have been seen at nearly a dozen locations throughout the Commonwealth. Some of the spots include the Massachusetts Turnpike in Chicopee,



Interstates 195 in New Bedford, 93 in Medford, 495 in Lawrence, 195 in Fall River, and 93 in Stoneham, as well as Routes 1, 9, and 146 in Foxboro, Westborough, and Millbury.

Near the end of 2012, we partnered with Comcast to produce two Public Services Announcements (PSAs) that highlight how Veterans have used the site to find their benefits and urged other citizens to do the same. The PSAs began to air in early 2013 and can be found by Comcast customers on its On Demand program and on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNvTQRUzZyE). They also aired during regular programming, including the Super Bowl pre-

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COLEMAN'S CORNER

*Words from the Secretary of the
Massachusetts Department of
Veterans' Services*



As another round of holidays is upon us, we are reminded of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, and the families who will never be able to take a full family picture again. Each year, Wreaths Across America honors these lost family members by placing wreaths at over 800 cemeteries and state capital ceremonies across the nation. Massachusetts had twenty-two cemeteries this year, and I was honored to be joined by Wreaths Across America for a ceremony at the State House, as well as two additional events at the Agawam and Winchendon Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries. This year, approximately 1,500 wreaths were placed at the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon on December 13th. The cemetery received enough donations this year to honor every person laid to rest there, and the extra wreaths were given to the families of local fallen Soldiers. Approximately 1,800 wreaths were placed at the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Agawam, almost 700 more than last year.

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game show!

This December, we announced the launch of our new television show, AT EASE!, which is made possible through a unique partnership with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech, the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services, and Westborough TV. As its name



implies, you can expect to see similar content to what you have come to expect in this newsletter. The show will feature Veterans from across the Commonwealth, as well as news about the benefits and services that can be found on MassVetsAdvisor.org. We will also be on location for a number of episodes, so that our viewers can learn more about the numerous local events that we attend.

To view our first episode, visit Westborough TV's website at www.westboroughtv.org/search_listings.html. On that site, you can also find a PSA featuring Governor Deval Patrick urging Veterans and their families to find their benefits on MassVetsAdvisor.

2013 also led to a number of improvements on MassVetsAdvisor. The site can now be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages through the use of Google Translator. A Veterans Job Bank has also been conveniently added to the main page through a widget developed by the National Resources Directory, which assists Veterans who are looking for a job.

In addition, 58 benefits and services were added to the site over the past year. Our work has led to nearly 30,000 unique users, who viewed over 140,000 pages on MassVetsAdvisor. Not surprisingly, we have had many visits from users in Boston, Worcester, and Springfield, as well as areas with VA hospitals such as Brockton, Northampton, and Bedford, which all ranked in our 'Top 10' locations for the year. MassVetsAdvisor also had an international reach, having been viewed in 95 countries. Most of these are countries with large military bases such as Germany, however, 18 individuals deployed to Afghanistan also searched for their benefits this year.

BENEFIT OF THE MONTH

Massachusetts Professional State Licensing Programs

The Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure (DPL) oversees 31 boards that license over 365,000 individuals and businesses in a wide range of professions and trades, including electricians, plumbers, engineers, architects, and allied health professionals.

DPL is a regulatory agency within the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, and is responsible for ensuring regulatory compliance and the integrity of the licensing process for its boards.

If you need assistance, please contact the respective agency's customer service contact page and they will get back to you as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please contact your local Veterans Services Officer or the Department of Veterans' Services at 617-210-5480, or at MDVS@vet.state.ma.us.

ASK GENERAL KNOWHOW

Question: How many financial benefits are on MassVetsAdvisor? – Amy, Boston



110 financial benefits can be found on the site. Be sure to search for those benefits and more on MassVetsAdvisor.org!



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 29, 2014 – 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Veterans Food Bank

Bunker Hill Community College
250 Rutherford Street, Charlestown, MA

Come receive up to 20-25 pounds of nutritious produce. Hosted by the MA Department of Veterans' Services and the Greater Boston Food Bank. To register online, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/food-bank-distribution-bunker-hill-community-college-registration-8246725177 or call 617-210-5762. Please bring proof of Veteran status or a copy of a marriage certificate for dependents.

Save the Date: March 22, 2014

Operation Money Wise

Mass Bay Community College
50 Oakland Street, Wellesley, MA

This is a free, one-day personal finance event for Veterans, Active Duty, Guard and Reserve members, and their families. The conference will build financial knowledge and answer financial questions specific to your service. Operation Money Wise is presented in partnership by the Office of the Massachusetts State Treasurer, Massachusetts Financial Literacy Trust Fund, Massachusetts National Guard & Reserve, and the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services. Online Registration will be available February 2014. For more information, contact Shelia O'Loughlin at 617-637-9333 x615.

HAVE SOMETHING TO ADD?

Do you have a good story to tell? Have a question for General Knowhow? Know of an upcoming Veterans-focused event?

Let us know! We are always looking for new content to add to MassVetsAdvisor.org and AT EASE! If you have something you would like to share, please email us at toto@masstech.org. You or your service can be featured on the website and the newsletter!

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