



Army Strong Community Center

Connecting Soldiers, Families, & Communities



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN BRISTOL, CT



eBenefits

eBenefits is a web portal central location for Veterans, Service Members, and their Families to research, find, access, and manage their benefits and personal information.

eBenefits offers a personalized workspace called My Dashboard that provides quick access to eBenefits tools. Using eBenefits tools, you can complete various tasks. You can apply for benefits, download your DD 214, view your benefits status, in addition to other actions as needed. This workspace is available to you once you have created an eBenefits account. eBenefits provides a catalog of links to other sites that provide information about military and Veteran benefits.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) are committed to improving the online experience for our Veterans and service members. Since our inception in 2009, we have added more than 30 features that allow direct access to your benefits and personal information. Look for additional feature and process enhancements in future quarterly releases.

For more information, visit <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>.

JUNE 2014

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OFFICE HOURS
Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm



Army Strong Community Center (ASCC) is an Army Reserve Family Program



Flag Day

Flag Day, June 14th is a day for all Americans to celebrate and show respect for our flag, its designers and makers. Our flag is representative of our independence and our unity as a nation.....one nation, under God, indivisible. Our flag has a proud and glorious history. It was at the lead of every battle fought by Americans. Many people have died protecting it. It even stands proudly on the surface of the moon. As Americans, we have every right to be proud of our culture, our nation, and our flag. So raise the flag today and every day with pride!

The information presented in this newsletter is for informational awareness only and does not represent endorsement, sponsorship, recommendation, or promotion of any commercial event(s), commercial names or brands by the editors of this Newsletter, the Department of Defense, US Army, US Navy, US Air Force, US Coast Guard, National Guard or Reserve, and the federal government. Usage of commercial or trade mark names is for identification purposes only.



Army Reserve Family Programs

“Take any suicidal talk or behavior seriously. It's not just a warning sign that the person is thinking about suicide — it's a cry for help.” — from Helpguide.org.

Military Family Support Group

Tuesday, June 3; July 1, 2014 | 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Armed Forces Reserve Center
375 Smith Street
Middletown, CT 06457

Support Group is hosted by CT National Guard Service Member and Family Support Center. For more information, call (800) 858-2677.

Middlesex County Career Fair

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 | 11:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Crowne Plaza
100 Berlin Road
Cromwell, CT 06416

Dress to impress and bring plenty of resumes! For more information, visit <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/jobfairs/default.htm>.

PTSD Discussion Group

Tuesday, June 17; July 15, 2014 | 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Army Strong Community Center
111 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010

Discussion Group is for Service Members and their Families. Readjustment counselor-led discussion group to help Service Members, Veterans and Family Members recognize and be aware of health Issues that can occur with reintegration, with a focus on the warning signs of PTSD and depression. Family members are invited to attend 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM; Service Members / Veterans from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM.

To register, contact the ASCC by noon the day before the event.

US Family Health Plan Q & A Sessions

Tuesday, June 24; July 22, 2014 | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Army Strong Community Center
111 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010

Session is for Military Retirees, Family Members of Active Duty Service Members (i.e. Deploying), and Recently Reintegrated Active Duty. Come speak with a representative of US Family Health Plans, a TRICARE Prime option, and make sure you have the health coverage you need and should have.

For more information, contact the ASCC Bristol.

Service Providers Available at the ASCC Bristol

American Legion Department Service Officer
1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

To schedule an appointment, contact the ASCC.

Vet Center Readjustment Counselor
Every Friday morning
8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

The Counselor is also moderating a monthly PTSD discussion group. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact the ASCC.

**State of Connecticut, Department of Veterans
Affairs - Veterans Service Officer**
3rd Wednesday of the month
9:30 AM – 3:00 PM



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Take the **MILITARY SAVES** pledge at www.militarysaves.org for tips, news, and advice to help you save more successfully!

Did You Know . . .

Veterans Justice Programs Take Two

“The purpose of the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health and substance services.” Department of Veterans Affairs, April 30, 2009. Under Secretary for Health’s information Letter.

There are 2 jail diversion programs in the State of Connecticut for eligible veterans involved in the judicial justice system. They are the Veterans Jail Diversion Program (“VJDP”) and the VA CT Healthcare System Veterans Justice Outreach (“VJO”). VJDP is administered through the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (“DMHAS”), while VJO is administered through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, VA CT Healthcare System. Both programs are designed to assist Veterans avoid incarceration by accessing various mental health and substance abuse services. If a Veteran is eligible for VA healthcare then he/she is most likely eligible for the VJO program. Any veteran is eligible for the VJDP program regardless of his/her papers.

VJDP and VJO are not “get out of jail free” passes. Rather they provide for a clinical liaison to consult with the Veteran, allow the Veteran access to VA services and treatment programs, and provide the courts with pre-trial treatment plans as an *alternative* to incarceration. These programs cannot accept custody of a Veteran; the advocates do not guarantee acceptance into any program nor do they advocate for a change of legislation. Services available may include: inpatient/outpatient medical and/or psychiatric care; nursing home referrals; sexual trauma counseling; specialized healthcare for women Veterans; homeless assistance and housing referral; readjustment counseling; vocational services; anger management; short term substance abuse counseling; and PTSD treatment.

There is coverage in all the courts located in Connecticut. VJO operates in the Waterbury, Bristol and New Haven Superior Court systems. VJDP operates in the New London, Norwich, Danielson and Middletown Superior Courts.

For more information, visit www.ct.gov/dmhas/VJDP.

If you would like more information or specific contact information, please contact the Army Strong Community Center.

ASCC CAN DOs

The Staff members at the Army Strong Community Centers are there to help guide and assist you in finding the correct service provider or agency to help in a particular situation.

The ASCC Staff can provide you with resources to help you find employment. The Staff can share job leads as they receive them from community partners. The Staff can allow you to use the on-site, family-use computers and printers to work on your resume. They can provide you with contact information for employment specialists to help you develop your resume and translate your military experience into civilian terminology.

The ASCC Staff can provide you with resources to help you find transitional or permanent housing. The Staff can direct you to local community partners that can assist with housing, such as VA Homeless Intervention teams, Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF), or Rapid Re-housing programs.

The ASCC Staff can provide you with resources to help you find temporary, financial assistance through various community and state partners, as well as some government resources. They can direct you to non-profits that might be able to assist with clothing, furniture, and food donations as well.

The ASCC Staff can provide you with resources to assist you with VA Healthcare applications and claims. The



Army Reserve Family Programs

Breathe2Relax is a portable stress management tool. Breathing exercises have been documented to decrease the body's 'fight-or-flight' (stress) response, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, and anxiety management. www.t2.health.mil/apps/breathe2relax.

ASCC Staff has numerous resources with the state Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA Healthcare System and the various Veterans Service Officers throughout the state. The ASCC Staff can walk you through the process of requesting your discharge papers (DD214) if you no longer have them.

The ASCC Staff can provide you with resources for your Families, such as information regarding how to cope with deployment and reintegration, summer camps and year-round child care, and family counseling. The ASCC Staff can keep you apprised of various events and activities geared towards Military Families. The ASCC Staff can provide you with resources for education and scholarship information.

50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

Connecticut is expecting more than 30,000 people at the Connecticut Air Guard in East Granby and the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks when it commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War on July 10-12, 2015 with a Vietnam 50th Celebration weekend. All are invited to come recognize and honor New England's Vietnam Veterans and honor, by remembrance, those who did not return.

This three-day event (sponsored by the CCSU Veterans History Project, the New England Air Museum, the Connecticut National Guard, Bradley International Airport, the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Association of the United States Army) will feature amazing vehicle and aircraft displays, helicopter rides in the famous UH-1D "Huey," and a complete, six aircraft rescue demonstration by "The Sky Soldiers" each day. Other unique features of the event include hands-on demonstrations, "fly-bys" and static displays of vehicles and equipment operated by our armed forces during the war. Vietnam era aircraft at the New England Air Museum will be open for cockpit tours,

manned by Vietnam Veterans. Individual stories of veterans will be presented along with memorabilia. Sure to be popular will be the "Veterans' Gathering" tent for veterans to reunite and reconnect!

Additionally, there will be programs specifically designed to remember those who gave the "last full measure of devotion". Exhibits feature a "Wall of Letters," photo displays of veterans who were KIA or MIA, and special events for Gold Star Families will be featured.

This event is designed to educate a new generation about the Vietnam War and the part it played in the lives of our friends, relatives and neighbors whose stories are the building blocks of American History. All high schools will be eligible to enter a history competition about the war.

A highlight each day will be "Rescue at Dawn", a one-of-a-kind, Army combat aerial re-enactment demonstrating the rescue of a downed pilot by the "Sky Soldiers". Six Vietnam Era air craft take part in this exciting rescue simulation as multiple Cobras, Hueys and Scout planes locate, defend, and rescue a downed airman.

Whether you are a Vietnam Veteran, a friend or family member of a veteran, or just want to recognize the sacrifices made by our veterans, this celebration should not be missed! To make this a memorable tribute to our veterans we need your help.

For more information, contact Eileen Hurst, director of CCSU's Veterans History Project, at hurstem@ccsu.edu or (860) 832-2976.

*By Eileen Hurst
Director
Veterans History Project
Central Connecticut State University*





Army Reserve Family Programs

What to know and do about scam alerts. Stay a step ahead with the latest info and practical tips from the nation's consumer protection agency – www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts.

Army Reserve YLEAD Summits

Youth Leadership, Education and Development (YLEAD) summits provide an opportunity for Army Reserve teens to come together, learn new skills and build new connections.

AT YLEAD, Army Reserve Youth:

- Connect with one another.
- Participate in activities that promote success at home, in school and within the community.
- Learn more about the Army Reserve.
- Find out how to make a difference in the lives of Army Reserve Families.
- Discover ways to become involved through partnerships with teens, adults and community-based programs.

YLEAD participants engage in several sessions that promote resilience and leadership skills such as communication, decision making, exploring interests, and youth-adult partnerships.

YLEAD is open to Army Reserve Teens ages 14-17 who reside in the states indicated for each region.

A service learning project is also conducted, and past YLEAD participants have cleaned up beaches, sorted and packed food at a food bank, and helped paint The Fisher House. Youth have the opportunity to visit the city where YLEAD is held through educational and fun outings.

YLEAD is offered at no cost, as youth are placed on travel orders which cover transportation, lodging and meals. The youth then becomes a volunteer for the Command, and is able to apply lessons learned at the next Family Day, FRG meeting, Yellow Ribbon event or other Family Programs approved event.

Southeast Region (For youth that reside in AL, AR, TX, MS, FL, GA, LA, SC, NC, TN)

June 23-27 | Raleigh, NC

Registration is open April 27 to June 1.

For questions, contact Danielle Peschon at Danielle.s.peschon.ctr@mail.mil.

West Coast Regions (For youth that reside in CA, WA, OR, NV, AZ, ID, MT, UT, CO, NM, HI, AK)

July 7 – 11 | Sacramento, CA

Registration is open May 4 to June 15.

For questions, contact Camara Rajabari at Camara.m.rajabari.ctr@mail.mil.

Atlantic (For youth that reside in Puerto Rico)

July 24-27 | San Juan, PR

Registration is open May 18 to June 29.

For questions, contact Barbara Rodriguez at Barbara.i.rodriguez.ctr@mail.mil.

Midwest Region (For youth that reside in WY, NE, MN, IN, IL, IA, MI, KY, MO, ND, SD, KS, OK, OH)

August 11-15 | Chicago, IL

Registration is open May 11 to July 20.

For questions, contact LeeAnne Quashie at leeanne.quashie.ctr@mail.mil.

Northeast Region (For youth that reside in MA, NH, VT, DE, ME, RI, CT, NY, NJ, MD, VA, DC, PA, WV)

August 20-24 | Pittsburgh, PA

Registration is open May 22 to July 29.

For questions, contact Vicki Buck at vicki.j.buck.ctr@mail.mil.

Interested youth and parents can get more information about YLEAD or register for an event at www.cyssevents.com/ylead.asp.

This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth and School Services.

For more information on resources and programs, visit <https://www.arfp.org/cyss>.



Army Reserve Family Programs

MORE
THAN A NUMBER

DEFEND VETERANS' IDENTITIES
www.va.gov/identitytheft

Coaching Into Care

Coaching into Care provides a free and confidential coaching service to help callers discover new ways to support their Military Members with a goal of getting them into Mental Health treatment or learn of other resources to resolve issues. The Families of Soldiers and Veterans now have a chance to receive assistance and on-going follow-up with a Life Coach from the VA.

Coaching Into Care is aimed to show the Family Member how to support their Military Member, with regular one-on-one 'life coaching' via phone, which provides the skills of communication, education, navigating the VA system, treatment options, how to positively deal with a Military Member's resistance to treatment; use of web-based video training to understand causes and find solutions.

For more information, visit

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/> or call (888) 823-7458 (M-F 8AM-8PM EST) or email CoachingIntoCare@va.gov.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance

Premium Adjustment Effective July 1, 2014

The Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program will adjust its monthly premium rate from 6.5 cents per \$1,000 back to the 2006 rate of seven cents per \$1,000 of insurance, a modest increase to ensure the SGLI program remains in a strong financial position. For a Servicemember with the maximum \$400,000 of life insurance, this change will mean an increase of two dollars a month. The new premium rate will take effect on July 1, 2014. Individual Ready Reserve members who are drilling for points toward retirement or who do not receive pay for other reasons will be billed by their branch of service for the higher premium beginning in July 2014.

For information on the new rates, visit

<http://benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp>.

More Than a Number: Identity Theft Prevention

VA Identity Theft Prevention

Every piece of personally identifiable information, whether it's a Social Security number, date of birth, home address, etc., is **more than just a number**. It represents a person's identity, livelihood, and personal or financial well-being.

VA's *More Than a Number* identity protection program provides information to educate Veterans and their beneficiaries on how to protect themselves from identity theft. On this website, you will find a wide range of information on identity theft, how to spot it, ways to prevent it, and what to do if you suspect you are a victim. You can also browse through links to other useful identity theft resources from across the Web.

In addition, we have created a toll-free Identity Theft Resource Line for Veterans and their beneficiaries to call for more information or if they suspect that their identities may have been compromised. The toll-free number is (855) 578-5492 or you can email us at vaidtheft@va.gov. Hours of Operation are 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM (Eastern), Monday-Friday

For more information, visit www.va.gov/identitytheft.

Happy Father's Day





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Female Veterans have a new resource for information on VA health care and benefits: 1-855-VA-WOMEN—
<http://www.va.gov/womenvet>.

United Concordia

United Concordia will begin administering the new Active Duty Dental Program (ADDP) contract on August 1, 2014. This contract contains new program features that will benefit eligible service members under the Remote ADDP. United Concordia will offer informational Remote ADDP webinars during the months of June and July 2014. To view the dates and times of the Remote ADDP webinars go to (<https://secure.addp-ucci.com/ddpddw/adsm/webinars2014.xhtml>).

Remote ADDP eligibility must be reflected in DEERS, and includes the following:

- Service members who reside AND work (duty location) more than 50 miles from a military dental treatment facility
- Personnel in Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) status following activation of more than 30 days for a contingency operation
- "Early Activator" National Guard/Reserve personnel activated for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation
- Wounded Warriors
- Personnel who have a Defense Health Agency (DHA) approved Line of Duty (LOD) dental determination, subject to mileage requirements noted in the first bullet
- Certain foreign military members

Service members MUST reflect Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) eligibility on the date of service to be covered by the ADDP. An Appointment Control Number provided by United Concordia must be received prior to receipt of all non-emergency care.

For additional information, visit www.addp-ucci.com or call Isaiah Edwards, Dental Benefits Advisor at (904) 998-7244 or email isaiah.edwards@ucci.com.

Education & Career Counseling Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Education and Career Counseling program offers a great opportunity for transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans to get personalized counseling and support to guide their career paths, ensure most effective use of their VA benefits, and achieve their goals.

Eligibility

- Transitioning Servicemembers within six months prior to discharge from active duty
- Veterans within one year following discharge from active duty
- Any Servicemember/Veteran eligible for a VA education benefit
- All current VA education beneficiaries

Services Include:

- Career Choice - understand the best career options based on your interests and capabilities
- Benefits Coaching - guidance on the effective use of VA benefits and/or other resources to achieve education and career goals
- Personalized Support - Academic or adjustment counseling and personalized support to help remove any barriers to success

For more information, contact VA by calling the nationwide toll free number, (800) 827-1000. For hearing impaired, dial (800) 829-4833.





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The **PTSD Coach** app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that often occur after trauma.
www.ptsd.va.gov/public/materials/apps/PTSDCoach.asp

Social Security Administration Important Information: Changes In Certain Services

To meet the increasing demands for our service, we need to make changes to how we provide some services to our customers. To protect the integrity of the Social Security number and prevent fraud, we will discontinue providing Social Security number printouts effective August 1, 2014. If you need proof of your Social Security number and you do not have your Social Security card, you will need to request a replacement Social Security card by completing the Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5) and providing the required documentation.

Also, effective October 1, 2014, Social Security will stop providing benefit verification letters in our offices. You will still be able to get an instant letter online with a personal *my Social Security* account or you may call us toll-free to request a letter by mail.

See steps below for requesting a replacement Social Security card or obtaining your benefit verification letter. We also encourage you to visit www.socialsecurity.gov to learn about the many convenient online services available to you.

How to get replacement Social Security cards

Your Social Security card is your legal proof of your Social Security number. If you need proof of your number, and you can't find your card, you will need a replacement card. To get a replacement card, you must complete an Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5), which you can find online at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber. You also will need documents proving your identity, age and citizenship or lawful immigration status.

In most cases, you can take, or mail, your completed application and original documents to any Social Security office. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/locator to find the Social Security office or Social Security Card Center that

serves your area. After processing, we will return your documents to you.

How to get benefit verification letters

If you need proof of your Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits, you can get a benefit verification letter online instantly through a *my Social Security* account. To create an account, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount. With my Social Security, you can easily view, print or save an official letter that includes proof of your:

- Benefit amount and type.
- Medicare start date and withholding amount (if applicable).
- Age.

If you are unable to go online, you can call our toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) to request your letter be mailed to you. You also can use your annual cost-of-living adjustment notice or SSA Form 1099 as proof of income from Social Security.

For more information

Call our toll-free number, 1-800-72-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), and ask for helpful publications, such as:

- How To Create An Online Account (Publication No. 05-10540);
- Your Social Security Number and Card (Publication No. 05-10002); and
- What You Can Do Online (Publication No. 05-10121).

A wealth of information and online service options are available on our website at

www.socialsecurity.gov.