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Upcoming Events!

- 2010 Spring Conference: March 19-21 - Virginia Beach Resort, Va Beach \$85
- Memorial Day 2010 : Monday May 31
- 2010 State Convention: July 8-11 - Sheraton Richmond West, Richmond \$99
- 2010 Fall Conference: October 29-31 Holiday Inn, Hampton \$74
- 2011 State Convention July 14-17 Roanoke Plaza Hotel & Holiday Inn, Roanoke

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Thawing Out VA&R

Despite the "artic blast" that has beset the Commonwealth the last few weeks, VA&R/VAVS folks are "mushing" on to provide our active duty personnel, veterans and their families the support, encouragement and assistance to insure that they receive the full measure of benefits they have so deservedly earned. Chuck Gudis and I recently attended a National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event, at which we were honored to speak with a large number of the 409 National Guardsmen from the 266th Military Police Company and the 180th HON CON Company. Many of these young people have been deployed three times! Virginia's Finest to be sure. I believe that we were able to assist several of these comrades with information's and direction on initiating VA claims and their expressed need, in some cases, for temporary financial aid, something that we don't often think about in our day to day goings on. Hopefully at the next event, tentatively set at the Omni Hotel in Richmond, date to be announced later, we can have a service officer or two with us so that we can further our mission efforts for these deserving patriots.

Roscoe Eagle, Les Grizzard and the fine folks at the Washington D.C. VAMC are and have been since last year, gearing up for their annual "Winterhaven" homeless standown to take place on January 23rd. Unfortunately, I have scheduling conflicts on that date but am sincerely hoping that any comrades in and around the Washington area will come out and assist them all you can.

Thanks largely to the hard work and dedication of Comrade Herm Prillip and the good folks in and around the Roanoke area; the VA&R Committee was able to forward two tremendous monetary donations to the Veterans Care Center in Roanoke and the Salem VAMC over the winter. The donation to the medical center is ear marked to defray the cost of their annual "Spring Carnival" in which I have had the extreme pleasure to attend. The event is a marvelous showing of support for our hospitalized veterans. The event usually occurs in May and WE, The American Legion, Department of Virginia, are in need of a coordinator! James Owen is the new VAVS representative for the Salem facility, but has expressed concerns about



being able to fully immerse his responsibilities' as he resides in Appomattox. Over fifteen Posts and Units, in the 9th and 7th Districts primarily, have contributed to the enormous success of this event in the past. WE need some one or some Post, Unit or entity to "Step Up" and help with vital endeavor. Of course I am always willing to do what I can.

Comrades, the dreaded "big yellow package" with year end reports will be hitting you soon. Hopefully everyone has been logging and annotating their VA&R/VAVS time spent monetary and other donations, mileages, etc. as we go along. Lets again show the National Organization what Virginia Legionnaires are about – the 1st Pillar!

I stand ready to assist in any way I can, my info is listed in the Directory of Officers. Call, write or email if I can help.

For GOD and Country
Ike Kelley
VA&R Committee Chairman

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CAN YOU VOLUNTEER?

Did you know that the VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service) is the largest program in the federal government? This organization has been around for 63 years and has supplied million of hours to our veterans. Last year alone the total hours were 916,000 with over 6000 volunteers. We in the Department of Virginia were 250 regularly scheduled volunteers and about 275 occasional volunteers with total hours of 25,000. Where you part of the total?

With over 50,000 members in the Department we should be able to do better. Volunteers and donations do make a difference. Today the VA provides opportunities ranging from direct patient contact to outpatient assignments and everything in between. You can volunteer as an individual as a regularly scheduled or occasional volunteer or your post can hold a special event at a VHA facility.

Today there are VA volunteers working in the medical centers, CBOC (Community Based Outpatient Clinics), Fisher Houses, VCC (Veteran Care Centers), Vet Centers and even at home. There is no minimum or maximum time required. Many work 4 hours a week. Some give 1000 hours a year. It all counts.

How can you become part of this program?

- Decide if you wish to a regularly or occasional volunteer or your post wish to hold a special event.
- Chose the VHA location.
- Contact the VHA facility and speak with the VAVS Program Manager.

Not all volunteers will be required to attend the orientation however all must sign in when volunteering at the facility.

The first pillar of the American Legion was support to our veterans and this is one way to perform that need. We need to increase our volunteers in the VA. Can you help?

For more information contact the Department VAVS Chairman.

Chuck Gudis
804-744-1065



Useful Tips For Vets Seeking Fed Jobs

By Lily Whiteman | <http://www.FederalTimes.com>

Given the Obama administration's launch of a new program to boost veteran hiring at federal agencies, here are some tips to help members of the military and veterans make the transition: Surf these Web sites: the Veteran's Employment Resource Center at USAJobs.gov; the intelligence community's careers page at intelligence.gov; the CIA's careers page for military transitioners at www.cia.gov; the Homeland Security Department's veterans outreach page at www.dhs.gov; Defense Department opportunities for veterans at www.dodvets.com and www.godefense.com; and the Defense Logistics Agency's information for prospective employees at www.hr.dla.mil.

Explore all options. Most agencies - including those in the Defense, intelligence and Foreign Service communities - sponsor dynamic, well-paying internships and training programs that fast-track young professionals into management. However, most of these programs are only announced on agency Web sites, not on USAJobs.gov. For example, the Army Material Command's Fellows Program is announced under civilian careers at www.amc.army.mil, and many Defense Department programs are announced at dodvets.com.

Prove that you wielded responsibility. Identify in your applications your final rank, the number of people under your command, and the positive feedback you received, including promotions, medals, honors and positive annual evaluations. Also, prominently cite your past or current security clearances in your applications and interviews. Such clearances may increase the number of jobs for which you qualify and boost your salary offers.

Describe your generic, transferable skills. Discuss in your applications the challenges you faced in the military and what you learned by conquering them. For example, describe how your experience as a combat infantry leader sharpened your leadership skills, enhanced your decision-making skills, taught you how to allocate assignments to team members based on their skills, increased your adaptability to changing circumstances, and improved your ability to effectively communicate with people of diverse backgrounds. Other selling points include technical expertise, self-discipline, experience handling confidential information, attention to detail, international experience, knowledge of geographic regions, language skills and an ability to excel in high-pressure situations.

Translate your military experience into civilian terms. Remember that hiring managers are only impressed by applications they understand. So define technical terms, titles and acronyms that will stump civilians or avoid using them altogether. Also, explain the importance of your work to your unit. Confirm your application's effectiveness by testing it on civilians.

Here is an excerpt from the rejected resume of a veteran who ignored these principles: "I prepared Mission Need Statements (MNS) and Capstone Requirements Documents (CRDs) that were mandated when Joint Strike Fighters or IMDs were introduced. The audience for these documents was the Flag-level officers in the J1, J2 and J3 Directorates."

Submit all required documents. Many veterans sabotage their applications by neglecting to submit or failing to label documents proving their military service or disability, or by failing to bring such documents to career fairs.]

Negotiate your salary. The most important question in salary negotiations is usually, "Is this offer negotiable?" Just asking for a better offer is frequently all it takes. The time to initiate salary negotiations is after you receive an offer and before you respond to it; once you accept a job, you lose your leverage.

If the human resources' contact for your target job is unwilling to negotiate your salary, ratchet your request up to your target job's hiring manager. Support your request with an explanation of how your education or military experience exceeds the basic qualifications for your target job.

But even more importantly, remember that your target agency will probably base its salary offer on your military salary. You should explain how your military salary underestimates your true income by excluding



bonuses, overtime pay, or benefits such as housing allowances and child care. And if accepting the job offer would require you to move to a location that would increase your cost of living, say so.

By using these techniques, one of my clients who transitioned from a military weapons specialist to a federal weapons analyst increased his salary offer by more than \$25,000. Also, request reimbursement for moving expenses and tuition, and support for continuing education, if appropriate.

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Legion Baseball e-Newsletter Makes its Debut

The American Legion - January 28, 2010

On Wednesday, American Legion Baseball launched its first issue of The Dugout, a complimentary e-mail newsletter for coaches that is delivered straight to their e-mail inbox. The monthly publication will feature photos and links on a variety of headlines that will easily direct coaches to the Legion Baseball Web site.

The Dugout's first issue features an informative Q&A with Luis Gonzalez, a five-time Major League Baseball All Star and hero of the 2001 World Series, photos of famous Legion baseball alumni, the success of online baseball registration and much more.

The Dugout has more than 600 subscribers already. If you have not signed up and would like to receive it, click here. It's free, and the latest baseball news and updates will be sent directly to your e-mail inbox.

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Veterans-Be Prepared

Chuck Gudis 804-744-1065

It is hard to face but the eventualities in life are illness and death. Those who are left must deal with either. It is up to the veteran to help ease these burdens to the friends and family who must face either. As a veteran's advocate, I have dealt with friends and families who were both uninformed and unprepared for either. They, many times have little or no knowledge of what is available or how to go about receiving help. It is up to the veteran to help ease some of these burdens with preparations in advance. Some thought today will make their life a little easier and will honor your wishes when you are incapacitated or gone.

Some of the preparation is simple:

1. Make sure your family knows where your discharge or DD 214 are kept. If you do have either, now is the time to get a copy. They are need for any benefits from the VA.
2. Make sure they know your claim number if you are receiving compensation from the VA.
3. Make sure a copy of your marriage certificate is kept in the same place.
4. Do you have a will? Do you have a living will?
5. Make sure they know who to contact by name and telephone number at your post for help and guidance.
6. Will your burial be in either a Veterans National or Veterans State Cemetery? If so now is the time to make application.
7. Compile a list of your wishes for long term care or funeral honors.

Contact your Post Service Officer or Department for information. There is available a brochure from the American Legion, "What To Do Before a Veteran Dies", 70-021 which will help in your pre-planning. Remember as veterans you have earned certain benefits that will be handled by the VA and families will be required to apply for said benefits.



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More great tours for 2010

- **Alaska** - July 8 • July 22 • Aug. 5 • Sept. 2 - Deluxe Cruise through the inside passage. Land Tour - Fairbanks, Denali Park, Anchorage, and much more!
- **China** - Mar. 15-28 - The Great Wall, Forbidden City, Terra Cotta Warriors, Yangtze River Cruise, and the General Stilwell Museum & the Flying Tigers.
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