



Military Families Connection

A bi-monthly newsletter of Military Families Connect
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January/February 2009



Meeting Information:

Location: American Legion Post 243, 40 Stafford St., Plymouth.

When: 4th Monday of each month, 5:30-7:30 pm.

Who: Military families, friends and service members.

Please bring a dish to share and your own beverage. Plates, napkins & silverware are provided.

Registration is appreciated for meeting planning. Child activities and care is provided.

Jan. 26 - Pocket Flag folding and Tax Information

Feb. 23 - Mental Health America (MHA) Overview and Emotions of the Deployment Cycle

March 23 - Cookie Campaign and troop care packages

Military Families Connect Coordinator and Editor:
Karen Degner
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★ Cookie Campaign

★ Once again, Military Families Connect will accept donations of Girl Scout cookies to send to area deployed service members. Boxes will be accepted thru March 20 at either Family Resource Center (FRC) location. We plan to package them for sending at our March 23 MFC meeting. If you would like to donate cookies or have your deployed service member included in the March package mailing, contact either FRC location for additional information.



★ Family and Medical Leave Regulation Updates

★ The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published a final rule to update its regulations under the 15 year old Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) that will help workers and their employers better understand their rights and responsibilities, and speed the implementation of a new law that expands FMLA coverage for military Family members. Final rule actions implementing the expansion of FMLA for military Families included Military Caregiver Leave and Leave for Qualifying Exigencies for National Guard and Reserves. For more detailed information, visit www.dol.gov/federalregister/HtmlDisplay.aspx?DocId=21763&AgencyId=10&DocumentType=2



★ Military OneSource Tax Filing Services

★ Beginning January 19, 2009 Military OneSource will provide free tax-filing services to service members and their families, including free online tax-filing services (both state and federal) and free tax consultations by phone. Users can access these free services through the link that we will post January 19 on the Military OneSource Online home page at www.MilitaryOneSource.com. (Please don't try to register in advance by accessing a tax-filing service Web site directly; the only way to use this free customized version of the tax site is through the Military OneSource home-page link.)

★ Please note that additional resources are available to include but not limited to:

- ★ *Filing Taxes When a Service Member is Deployed
- ★ *Quick Tips for Using Your Tax Refund
- ★ *Free File in partnership with the IRS offers free tax service to qualified taxpayers
- ★ *VITA-the military-based Volunteer Tax Assistance Program provides free tax advice, tax preparation, return filing, and other tax assistance to military members and their families.
- ★ *Armed Forces Legal Assistance Services Locator

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ Inside this issue:

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County Veteran Services Officer (CVSO) Corner

by Charlene Cobb

Happy New Year! I am honored to be the Sheboygan County Veterans Service Officer. We have a great county and I look forward to working with and for every one of you. I thank each and every one of our Service men and women and their families for their dedication in defending our country.

As we start this New Year we have a change in our government. Change can be good but we must always be diligent to ensure that our service and sacrifice is recognized and appreciated by those in control of our Veterans benefits.

I would like to exhort you to join EVERY Veterans Service organization/auxiliary for which you are eligible. They all have a different focus but ultimately a common purpose; to take care of our veterans. You are already members of those respective organizations by your or your spouses qualifying service, but it is extremely IMPORTANT that you become a card carrying member so your voice will be heard in Washington DC. In this year of plant closings and economic difficulties we need to have a VERY STRONG voice. Without it, we could see even more of our benefits falling by the wayside just when we need them the most.

Be active and involved in what is happening not only in your community but the county, state, country and world too. One person can (and often does) make a huge difference when they care and get involved.

The County Veteran Services Office serves all veterans, both wartime and peace time. The office is located in the lower level of the county courthouse, 615 N 6th St. Sheboygan WI 53081. Telephone: 920-459-3053, email: cvso@co.sheboygan.wi.us or www.co.sheboygan.wi.us



National Guard Child Care Subsidy Program

The National Guard is working to assist spouses and Family members with the cost of child care during deployment. Guard and Reserve members who are in Title 10 status are eligible to receive a subsidy to use off-post child care. The subsidy program is coordinated through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). The amount of the subsidy is based on total Family income, the number of children and type of child care needed. The minimum monthly pay out is \$100 per child per month. A call center has also been set up to help Guard members with the process of receiving the subsidy. For more information on the program, visit the National Guard Family Program's website at <http://www.guardfamily.org> or call 1-888-642-2799



TroopTube Boosts Morale among Deployed Servicemembers

Servicemembers overseas can now receive near-real-time video "shout-outs" from their stateside loved ones. TroopTube, modeled after the popular video-viewing site, YouTube, is a website managed by the Department of Defense's Military OneSource information network. The website allows Family events and milestones to be viewed by the deployed Servicemembers, letting them feel closer to home. TroopTube can be accessed at <http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com>.



Websites of Interest:

- www.wingfam.org - WI National Guard Family Program website
- www.guardfamily.org - National Guard Website
- www.LetsSayThanks.com - Xerox Cards
- www.MilitaryOneSource.com
- www.dol.gov - New Military Family Leave Act Entitlements

If you have service member deployed outside of the United States and you would like them included in our package mailing, contact Karen at MFC with their APO or FPO information. All information submitted is confidential and not shared.



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Project of the Family Resource Center of Sheboygan County