

The Bay State Patriot



A Publication Of

Massachusetts Department Of Veterans' Services

Volume 2, Issue 3



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Lieutenant Governor

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From Secretary Kelley

Throughout the United States, November 11 serves as a day to honor and recognize our nation's veterans. I am proud that Massachusetts does this each and every day through the care and services we provide to our service members and their families. Through these efforts, we continue to lead the nation in Veterans' Services.

The Commonwealth's Veterans Day program this year honored all Veterans, past and present. The ceremony included a special tribute to women veterans, led by Gail Cavanugh-McAuliffe, a U.S. Army veteran and employee of the Department of Veterans' Services. Tim Sullivan, Cdr. USN (Ret.) Former POW, and Maureen Dunn, National League of Families of POW/MIA, led a candle lighting ceremony for those who have been held prisoner or are missing. Gold Star Families were paid tribute with a rose presentation. Lieutenant Governor Murray led a two-minute moment of silence in honor of all Veterans.

I hope all of our Veterans celebrated and enjoyed a Happy Veterans' Day. On behalf of the Department of Veterans' Services, we thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Tom Kelley

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PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION HOSTS 2ND ANNUAL APPRECIATION DAY FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES



Governor Patrick with Brigadier Sellars of the Massachusetts National Guard and his family.

Photo Courtesy of Matt Bennett, Governor's Office

On September 25, 2010 Governor Deval Patrick, the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) hosted the 2nd Annual *Veterans' and Military Families Appreciation Day in the Park* at Houghton's Pond in Milton.

Veterans and their families from across the Commonwealth came out to enjoy the day's activities. Governor Patrick also issued a special invitation to the families of the service members he met during his recent trip to Iraq and Afghanistan, including the 164th Transportation Battalion of the Massachusetts Army National Guard; the

Massachusetts Army National Guard's 3/126 Aviation Brigade; the 1/101 Field Artillery Brigade; and the Massachusetts Army National Guard's 379th Engineering Company.

The event provided veterans and families, particularly those with disabilities, a chance to learn about DCR's Universal Access Program (UAP), which provides adaptive equipment to people with disabilities so that they may utilize the state park's recreational activities. Adaptive recreation equipment allowed all of the participants the opportunity to enjoy hiking, geocaching and fly-fishing among other activities.

In addition to recreational activities, Veteran Support agencies were present from the federal, state and local government, as well as non-profit agencies, offering information on benefits and services available to veterans and military families. The MBTA provided cost-free roundtrip service to veterans and families who traveled to the event via commuter rail.

Veterans and their families attending the event enjoyed one of Massachusetts' beautiful state parks, while also learning about the various programs offered at parks throughout the Commonwealth. The Milton Fire Department and DCR Fire Department were present to assist and provide children with fire safety training and a chance to climb into and explore a fire truck. Other activities included fly-fishing with "Operation Healing Waters," a presentation by the Blue Hills Reservation's Trailside Museum, as well as play areas and games for children.

PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCED \$1 MILLION IN RENEWED EMPLOYMENT GRANTS FOR MASSACHUSETTS VETERANS



Pictured left to right: John Yazwinski, Father Bill's & MainSpring, John Ratka, VNOC, Lieutenant Governor Murray, Vin Perrone, Veterans' Inc, and Undersecretary Coleman Nee.
Photo Courtesy of Father Bill's & MainSpring

On Thursday, September 9, 2010 Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray announced \$1 million in renewed workforce grants for Massachusetts veterans from the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service under the Veterans' Workforce Investment Program. The \$1 million awarded to the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) includes two Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Grants totaling \$500,000 and one Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) Grant for \$500,000 that will be allocated to 187 cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Within the HVRP program, the only federal program solely focused on the employment of homeless veterans, \$300,000 of the grant will fund programs that involve emergency shelter, job counseling and referrals, and employment assistance in 30 cities and towns in the Central and South Coast regions. In Fiscal Year 2010, as a result of the Urban HVRP Grant, 103 veterans were employed. For this year's grant, DVS has partnered, again, with Veterans, Inc. in Worcester for the Urban Homeless Veterans' Employment Initiative.

Also within HVRP, an additional \$200,000 will serve 14 cities and towns in the South Shore region as part of the HVRP Non-Urban Grant. DVS has collaborated with Father Bill's & MainSpring (FBMS) for a consecutive year to assure effective delivery of services to eligible veterans. In FY 2010, DVS and FBMS employed 41 veterans with HVRP funding.

The \$500,000 VWIP Grant awarded to DVS will provide funding to assist veterans in obtaining "green" jobs. Through this grant, 143 cities and towns will be served as DVS partners with the Veterans' Northeast Outreach Center (VNOC) in Haverhill to assist eligible veterans along the I-495 corridor. In Fiscal Year 2010, the VWIP Grant employed 200 veterans, including 63 veterans placed in green job sector. The Green TEAM (Training and Employment Access for Massachusetts) Veterans Initiative will utilize prior military experiences while training veterans for licensing, certifications and credentialing to help them become dutifully employed in this growing sector of our state and national economy.

Massachusetts will utilize its extensive network of veterans' programs and services to outreach and promote awareness of these new programs to veterans throughout the Commonwealth. DVS will network and coordinate efforts with various local, state and federal social service providers, including the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development and local career centers, when appropriate. DVS has successfully managed and administered HVRP and VWIP grants in prior years and, as a result, expects to see continued results as veterans gain training and

employment.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MURRAY JOINED VETERANS FOR THE DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CORRIDOR IN AUBURN



Lieutenant Governor Murray speaks at the dedication ceremony.

Photo Courtesy of Justin Newton, Lt. Governor's office.

On September 20, 2010 Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray joined the Friends of the Veterans' Memorial Corridor along with veterans, military groups, and state and local officials to dedicate the Veterans' Memorial Corridor in the town of Auburn.

The dedication ceremony follows the completion of a \$9.1 million reconstruction project, led by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), of the Corridor along Route 12 on Southbridge Street. As part of the ceremony, Lieutenant Governor Murray and the Friends of the Veterans' Memorial Corridor participated in a parade with the community to recognize the completion of the project and also honor

Massachusetts military servicemen and women.

As part of the funding for this reconstruction project, Congressman James McGovern worked with Congressman Richard Neal and Senators Ted Kennedy and John Kerry to secure \$1.25 million for the project in 2004.

The \$9.1 million MassDOT reconstruction project of the Corridor included the widening of Southbridge Street by 1.6 miles from two to four lanes and upgrading sidewalks and traffic signals. The Corridor enhancements also include four landscaped area parks with benches, pavers, lighting, irrigation and a gazebo. A portion of the enhancements was funded through a \$1 million MassDOT Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant, along with a \$250,000 federal grant through the National Corridors and Borders Program.

PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION CELEBRATED \$4.1 MILLION FOR BROADBAND ASSISTANCE TO HELP MASSACHUSETT'S VETERANS & SMALL BUSINESSES

\$1 Million to provide technical assistance for veterans

Continuing the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to supporting long-term economic growth and streamlining government services, Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray recently joined the Massachusetts National Guard and members of the veterans community to celebrate Massachusetts' receipt of \$4.1 million in federal stimulus funding that will provide broadband assistance for veterans and small businesses, and also enhance mapping efforts to expand broadband infrastructure.

In partnership with the Massachusetts congressional delegation, the Patrick-Murray Administration worked to secure this federal stimulus funding that will create new broadband adoption programs for both veterans and small businesses and provide continued support for the state's broadband availability mapping program. The funding was awarded to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute

(MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The first of the two new broadband adoption programs is a comprehensive web portal for veterans and family members to make online access of veterans' services more streamlined, safe and effective.

For more information on the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, please visit www.massbroadband.org.

GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNED LEGISLATION TO EXPAND VETERANS' HOUSING AND SERVICES IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS



Governor Deval Patrick signed into law legislation that will transfer a parcel of state owned land to Soldier On in Agawam. The law, "An Act Authorizing the Commissioner of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to Convey Certain Land in the Town of Agawam," will lead to increased services and the construction of limited equity cooperative.

The property, formerly the State Police Training Academy, is currently underutilized. By transferring this state owned land, Soldier

On has agreed to purchase 6.9 acres of the total 50-acre property for \$1 with plans to break ground on a \$12 million housing construction project in the fall or spring. The first phase of this project will create approximately 40 525-square foot studio apartments with the potential to create up to 100 housing units for veterans. Additionally, once redeveloped, veterans will have the opportunity to buy shares in a cooperative, paying real estate taxes to the town, adding a boost to the local property tax base. Soldier On will finance this project through a mix of state and federal grants, as well as loans dedicated to affordable housing.

Soldier On currently serves homeless veterans of U.S. military service at shelters in Leeds and Pittsfield, with a mission to end homelessness among veterans by providing permanent, sustainable, safe, affordable housing with support services that veterans will own and operate. On average, Soldier On supports 500 homeless veterans in 170 emergency, transitional and permanent supported housing units. As part of their mission, Soldier On is committed to providing an environment of integrity, dignity and hope that will help veterans regain physical and mental stability, housing and employment, economic stability and become contributing members of their community.

"SERVE YOUR DREAMS" PUBLIC SERVICE CAMPAIGN KICKED OFF

On July 3, 2010 Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, Veterans' Services Secretary Thomas G. Kelley, Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland, and University of Massachusetts Lowell Chancellor Martin T. Meehan urged thousands of Massachusetts veterans to learn about the "use it or lose it" provision within the federal law for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Veterans, whose service to the nation entitles them college tuition benefits, may be unaware of this provision, forfeiting their right to educational assistance.

As part of the Lowell Spinners' Military Appreciation Night, Administration officials joined UMass Lowell to announce a public service campaign that will alert veterans of the benefits they are eligible

for at approved colleges and universities statewide. The campaign features MBTA subway advertising, a radio public service announcement, movie theatre announcements and a full schedule of summer information sessions at fairs and other seasonal events.

Of the 35,000 veterans who have returned to Massachusetts after serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, approximately 6,000, including dependents, are currently using Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits. Depending on a veteran's eligibility tier, the benefit covers all or a portion of tuition and fees, a housing allowance, and books.

Joining state leaders to announce the GI Bill outreach campaign were student veterans from UMass Lowell including Ted Serozynsky, a 6 year Navy veteran who served on the USS Newport News nuclear submarine. He graduated from UMass Lowell this spring with an undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice and will continue his education at UMass Lowell to earn a graduate degree in his chosen field. He is the past president of the Student Veterans Organization, a member of the Salute Veterans Honor Society and also sits on the standing committee on Veterans Affairs.

Veterans seeking more information on benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill are encouraged to call 617-994-6914 or visit www.mass.edu/veterans.

GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNED LEGISLATION DESIGNATING SALEM AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD



Governor Patrick signs legislation declaring Salem, MA as the birthplace of the National Guard

Photo Courtesy of Matthew Bennett, Governor's Office

On Thursday, August 19, 2010 Governor Deval Patrick signed HB1145, "An Act Designating the City of Salem as the Birthplace of the National Guard." Joined by Major General Joseph C. Carter, the Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, military members and local officials at Salem City Hall, the Governor recognized the rich history of the National Guard in Massachusetts and honored past and present members of the Guard who have served our Commonwealth so faithfully throughout the years.

With the signature of this bill, Salem became publicly identified as the birthplace of the National Guard, adding value to the historical attraction already associated with that location and increasing public knowledge of the long history and important place that the Massachusetts National Guard has played and continues to play in the defense of the Nation.

The beginnings of the National Guard, and the United States Army in its earliest form, are traced back to the first muster of the East Militia on the Salem Green in April, 1636. Four of the oldest units in the United States Army serve in the Massachusetts National Guard today: the 181 Infantry Regiment (currently deployed in Afghanistan); the 182nd Cavalry Regiment; the 101st Field Artillery Regiment; and the 101st Engineer Battalion. Each of these units traces its regimental lineage to the Salem Militia, honored every year by The Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard at the Annual Salem Muster.

There are currently more than 1,700 Massachusetts National Guard troops deployed for duty overseas, and as Commander in Chief of the Massachusetts National Guard, Governor Patrick is

proud of the professionalism and courage displayed by those serving both overseas and here at home to keep the Commonwealth safe.

GRANTS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS OF VETERANS

Massachusetts is committed to assisting and serving Veterans across the Commonwealth. This means recognizing that there are specific needs even within the veteran community. Massachusetts was the recipient of a grant focused on specialized populations including Homeless Female Veterans and Veterans with Families in addition to a grant focusing on formerly incarcerated veterans at risk for homelessness.

Soldier On in Leeds and Veterans Inc. in Worcester are Massachusetts' grantees for the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program Grant and will focus on providing services to women veterans and veterans with families. Services provided will include job training, counseling and placement services (including job readiness, and literacy and skills training) to expedite the reintegration of homeless female veterans and veterans with families into the workforce through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.

Soldier On will receive \$200,000 to serve eligible veterans in Berkshire and Hampshire Counties, while Veterans Inc., located in Worcester, Mass., will receive a grant of \$94,220 to serve eligible veterans in the counties of Middlesex, Worcester, Essex, Hampton, Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol.

In addition, Soldier On received \$200,000 from the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service in Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program grants designed to aid veterans "at risk" of homelessness.

The Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program grants are intended to provide referral and counseling services to assist in reintegrating and/or transitioning formerly incarcerated veterans who are "at risk" of becoming homeless into meaningful employment within the labor force, and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing these veterans. This program is designed to be flexible in addressing the national, regional and/or local issues that prevent veterans from returning to the workforce after incarceration.

MASSACHUSETTS MEDAL OF LIBERTY



The Massachusetts Medal of Liberty is open to all branches of the service and is awarded in the name of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth to any Massachusetts serviceman or woman killed in action or who died as a result of wounds received in action. ([Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 33, Section 67A](#))

Surviving family members requesting retroactive awards of the Medal of Liberty must apply for the award through the Office of The Adjutant General. The [application is available online](#) or by request.

NEWS FROM THE VA

[VA Publishes Final Regulation on "Presumptive" Illnesses for Gulf War and Iraq,](#)

Afghanistan Veterans

September 28, 2010

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced the publication of a final regulation in the *Federal Register* that makes it easier for Veterans to obtain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in Southwest Asia (including Iraq) or Afghanistan.

"This is part of historic changes in how VA considers Gulf War Veterans' illnesses," said Secretary Shinseki. "By setting up scientifically based presumptions of service connection, we give these deserving Veterans a simple way to obtain the medical and compensation benefits they earned in service to our country."

The final regulation establishes new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia beginning on or after the start of the first Gulf War on Aug. 2, 1990, through the conflict in Iraq and on or after Sept. 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.

The final regulation reflects a determination of a positive association between service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan and nine diseases and includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with these diseases: Brucellosis, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Coxiella Burnetii* (Q fever), Malaria, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Nontyphoid *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

With the final rule, a Veteran will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan and that he or she had one of the nine diseases within a certain time after service and has a current disability as a result of that disease, subject to certain time limits for seven of the diseases. Most of these diseases would be diagnosed within one year of return from service, through some conditions may manifest at a later time.

For non-presumptive conditions, a Veteran is required to provide medical evidence to establish an actual connection between military service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan and a specific disease.

The decision to add these presumptives was made after reviewing the 2006 report of the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (NASIOM), titled, "Gulf War and Health Volume 5: Infectious Diseases."

The 2006 report differed from the four prior reports by looking at the long-term health effects of certain diseases determined to be pertinent to Gulf War Veterans. Secretary Shinseki decided to include Afghanistan Veterans in these presumptions because NAS found that the nine diseases are also prevalent in that country.

The 1998 Persian Gulf War Veterans Act requires the Secretary to review NAS reports that study scientific information and possible associations between illnesses and exposure to toxic agents by Veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War.

While the decision to add the nine new presumptives predates VA's Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force (GWVI-TF), the overarching responsibility of the GWVI-TF is to regain Gulf War Veterans' confidence in VA's health care, benefits, and services and reconfirm VA is 100 percent committed to Veterans of all eras. The GWVI-TF began in fall 2009 and is not a static, one-time initiative but will continue to build on its work with annual reports issued every August. The group's focus centers on unanswered Gulf War Veterans' health issues, improving access to benefits, ensuring cutting edge research into treatments, and to make sure Veterans' concerns are heard and addressed. This includes continuing to solicit Veterans, experts, advocates and

stakeholders to share their views to better inform the important work of the GWVI-TF. The GWVI-TF Report can be found at www.VA.gov.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. Last year, VA received more than one million claims for disability compensation and pension. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and beneficiaries. Currently, the basic monthly rate of compensation ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 for Veterans without any dependents.

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Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended

The deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to Dec. 3, 2010, allowing personnel more time to apply for the benefits they've earned.

To apply, or for more information on RSLSP, including submission requirements and service-specific links, go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

The deadline extension is included in the continuing resolution signed by President Obama yesterday, providing funding for federal government operations through Dec. 3.

"It's important that all those eligible for this benefit take the opportunity to apply for what they've earned," said Lernes Hebert, acting director, Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management. "We encourage those eligible to apply as soon as possible, to avoid the last minute rush, which can increase processing time."

RSLSP was established to compensate military members whose service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries are required to submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status.

The original deadline for claims was Oct. 21, 2010. When RSLSP began on Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts throughout the year. Efforts including direct mail, engaging military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets, will continue throughout the period of eligibility.

The Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) advocates on behalf of the nearly half-million veterans in Massachusetts, their families, and survivors. DVS works to secure federal compensation and other benefits for which veterans may be eligible. The Department also administers needs-based benefits program through Veterans' Service Officers throughout Massachusetts and provides state funding to organizations offering homeless shelter, transitional housing and outreach services to veterans.

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