Greetings and welcome to this the July 2014 edition of Front Lines, the unofficial newsletter of Cuyahoga Community College’s Veteran Services & Programs. Here’s a very full look at what’s happening…

**Fall 2014 Registration…:** It’s hard to believe but registration for Fall Session 2014 is underway. For those of you planning on attending classes during FALL Session 2014, now is the time to begin getting things in order particularly if you plan on using the GI Bill. The earlier you register, the earlier your paperwork gets to the VA, and the better chance you have that your GI Bill checks arrive in time to avoid be dropped from classes. Check-in with your respective Veterans Campus GI Bill Certifiers will be able to assist you if needed. Here’s the contact information:

WEST, WEST SHORE & BRUNSWICK Campuses: **Damian Thorkelson.** His office is located in WSS G220 in the Admissions and Registration Office. Damian’s direct line is 216-987-5203.

METRO Campus: **Della Hilbert.** Her office MSS G23 is located in the basement of the Student Services Building down the hall from the Business Office. Della’s direct line is 216-987-4164.

EAST Campus: **Evelyn Anderson.** Evelyn is located in ESS 1101 B. Her direct line is 216-987-2015.

In all cases, it is recommended to call first to schedule an appointment with the Certifier/Coordinator at your campus. Remember that you must see your respective GI Bill Certifier any time you register for classes, add classes, or drop classes.

**Ohio Department of Veterans Services (ODVS) News:** Here is the link to the July 2014 edition of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services electronic newsletter. We hope it is both interesting and useful to you. Please share it with other veterans: [http://dvs.ohio.gov/Portals/0/library/odvs/newsletter/2014/ODVSnewsletter-Jul2014.pdf](http://dvs.ohio.gov/Portals/0/library/odvs/newsletter/2014/ODVSnewsletter-Jul2014.pdf)

Also, please take the time to check out the ODVS social media pages at [www.ohiovet.gov](http://www.ohiovet.gov) and encourage other veterans to subscribe to our news updates. If you’d like to see past editions of the newsletter, here is the link to our archive: [http://dvs.ohio.gov/home/monthly_newsletter.aspx](http://dvs.ohio.gov/home/monthly_newsletter.aspx)

**Connect to the Ohio Department of Veterans Services online**

- Facebook: [http://www.facebook.com/ohiodepartmentofveteransservices](http://www.facebook.com/ohiodepartmentofveteransservices)
- Twitter: [http://twitter.com/#!/OhioVets](http://twitter.com/#!/OhioVets)

**VA and Veterans Service Organizations Announce Claims Initiative to Reduce Claims Backlog:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and The American Legion announced a new partnership to help reduce the compensation claims backlog for Veterans. The effort—the Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Community of Practice—is a key part of VA’s overall transformation plan to end the backlog in 2015 and process claims within 125 days at 98% accuracy. VA can process FDCs in half the time it takes for a traditionally filed claim.

Claims are considered to be “fully developed” when Veterans submit all available supporting evidence, like private treatment records and notice of federal treatment records, to VA at the time they first file a formal claim and certify they have no more evidence to submit. This is the information that VA needs to make a determination on a disability claim. The FDC program supports the sharing of best practices across Veterans Service Organizations, who help thousands of Veterans each year with their compensation claims, to identify up front all evidence necessary to support a Veteran’s claim. Veterans then certify that they have no additional evidence to submit, and VA can process the claim in half the time it takes for a traditionally filed claim.

VSOs have long played an integral role in submitting Veterans claims - often with representatives working within VA regional offices. VA has consulted with them throughout the development and implementation of VA’s plan to end the backlog in 2015 to ensure best practices and their unique insights were incorporated. The American Legion and DAV are the first to step forward to work with VA on the FDC program, and that program has led to a much more efficient process. Meaningful progress will be felt by increasing numbers of Veterans as more VSOs participate with VA in the FDC...
program. This initiative is just the latest example of the collaboration between VA and VSOs. In July, VA held a workshop to obtain the views of VSO representatives and to provide them with information on the effort to eliminate the claims backlog. The main focus of the workshop was VA’s emphasis on the shared goal of better serving Veterans and positive impact of filing Fully Developed Claims. These workshops will be replicated in VBA regional offices across the country.

Veterans can learn more about disability benefits on the joint Department of Defense-VA web portal eBenefits at http://www.ebenefits.va.gov and find information about filing Fully Developed Claims here: http://www.benefits.va.gov/transformation/fastclaims/. Servicemembers returning from active duty in combat theatres are eligible for five years of VA medical care – regardless of the status of any disability claim submitted. Medical care is not withheld while disability claims are under review. For more information on enrolling in VA health benefits, please visit http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/.

Rededication of Cleveland War Memorial: Fountain of Eternal Life - The Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial, Inc. (‘GCVM’) announced today that a formal rededication of the “Cleveland War Memorial: Fountain of Eternal Life,” Veterans’ Memorial Plaza (formerly “Mall A”) in downtown Cleveland, will take place on Friday, July 25, 2014 during the hours of 12:00 to 1 PM. The rededication will add the names of Cuyahoga County’s casualties of war from military service in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are 32 casualties, 31 men and 1 woman that lost their lives in military service to the nation. In addition, names of casualties from the following wars will be added to the Memorial; two from WWII, one from the Korean War and six from the Vietnam War. With the addition of the 41 names, the Memorial will contain the names of 5,551 patriots that gave their lives in service to the nation from the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and from the War in Iraq and Afghanistan.


2014 FOX 8 FOX Trot to support Wounded Warriors: Scheduled to begin at Voinovich Park by the Rock Hall in Cleveland Sunday morning, August 24, 2014. You can sign up to run in the 5K or the one-mile walk. Everyone who registers will get a FOX Trot T-shirt and a Wounded Warrior Project bracelet. http://fox8.com/2014/05/20/2014-fox-8-fox-trot-running-for-heroes/

That’s it for now… More as I get it...

**CDR Rick DeChant, USCG (ret)**
Executive Director
Veteran Services & Programs
Cuyahoga Community College