Greetings and welcome to the November 2014 edition of *Front Lines*, the unofficial newsletter of Cuyahoga Community College’s Veteran Services & Programs. Here’s what’s happening…

**Spring 2015 Registration Underway:** Spring 2015 registration is underway. As noted during previous registration evolutions, those of you planning on using GI Bill benefits for Spring Semester 2014 should plan on stopping by to see the GI Bill Certifying Officer at your respective campus Enrollment Center Office as soon as possible (West – Damian Thorkelson, Metro – Della Hilbert, East – Evelyn Anderson). You should also be stopping by your respective Counseling Office to ensure you are tracking with your academic plan. The reason for the early “jump” is because of the ongoing delays in processing GI Bill checks in St. Louis. The early start helps to ensure your account is credited with payment prior to the start of the semester. Lack of payment to the account could result in possible disenrollment. Let’s stay ahead of the game!

**Ohio Veterans Bonus Deadline Near for Gulf War Era Veterans:** Ohio veterans who served during the time of the Persian Gulf War have until December 31, 2014 to apply for the Ohio Veterans Bonus and receive the thank you for their service awarded them by Ohio’s citizens. The Ohio Veterans Bonus continues for veterans of the Iraq War, who have until December 31, 2014 to apply. No deadline has been announced for veterans of the Afghanistan War and all veterans who served after October 7, 2001. The Ohio Veterans Bonus is open to veterans of the Persian Gulf War era as well as the eras of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, regardless of where they served. However, the amount available is higher to those who served directly in the war zones. It is also open to the next of kin of those who were killed in action or died of disease as a result of in-theater service. The Bonus is not subject to federal or state taxes, and can be used for any purpose.

To date, almost $59 million has been paid to over 70,000 veterans and family members.

The specific criteria are below:

- Military service of more than 90 days active duty, not for training, anywhere in the world during the following periods:
  - August 2, 1990 through March 3, 1991 – Persian Gulf; deadline to apply is December 31, 2013
  - October 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President – Afghanistan
  - March 19, 2003 through December 31, 2011 – Iraq; deadline to apply is December 31, 2014
- Eligible veterans and military service members must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into the military, and must be Ohio residents at the time they apply.

The bonus pays $100 a month to veterans who served in the Persian Gulf Theater, or in the countries of Afghanistan or Iraq, up to a maximum of $1,000. For veterans who served elsewhere, the payment is $50 a month up to a $500 maximum. Veterans medically discharged due to injuries sustained in combat can receive $1,000, plus up to $500 for months of service elsewhere. Family members of those killed in action or who died from disease as a result of their in-theater service can receive a bonus of $5,000 plus whatever the service member was eligible for, up to a total of $6,500.

For more information or to apply:

- Call toll-free to 1-877-OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838) option 2
- Visit [www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov](http://www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov)
- Visit any county veteran service office (see [www.ohiovet.gov](http://www.ohiovet.gov) for an interactive map of the county offices). These offices can also provide information about all federal and state veterans’ benefits, and assist veterans in the application process.
- The department also provides information about the Bonus through its social media and at veterans’ events, and has advertised the program in print and broadcast media, as well as in veterans’ publications and a mailing to veterans whose service likely occurred during the Persian Gulf era.
New Cuyahoga County court will serve veterans charged with crimes (from The Plain Dealer): A new Veterans Court is being created to serve those who have served in the military and are charged with crimes. In January, a newly created Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Veterans Court will begin handling cases involving military veterans who are charged with felony crimes. The court, will aim to rehabilitate veterans; diverting them from the traditional justice system and help them access resources to cope with trauma, brain injuries and drug use that may have led them to commit crimes, according to a news release. Presiding Judge John J. Russo said he would appoint a colleague to head the Veterans Court in the next week. Russo said the court, approved by a vote of the judges, will reach out to area organizations that serve veterans, including the Veterans Administration, to better incorporate treatment and other options into the court process. Judges have the option to transfer involving veterans to that special court docket, which will provide programming for a minimum of a year. All types of felony cases, including those that are likely to end with a veteran on probation are eligible, but special priority will be given to high-risk veterans. Other specialized courts already include recently expanded Drug Court and a Mental Health court docket. Cuyahoga County is home to more than 80,000 veterans, the most in the state, according to 2012 statistics provided by the court. In 2012, 549 defendants booked into the Cuyahoga County Jail identified themselves as veterans. Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Peter Corrigan researched options for the court, according to the release. Veterans Courts in other areas have been found to be effective, especially if they have a "mentor program" to provide peer support.

Veterans Connections and information from the VA's website:
• Military Service Benefits
• Minority Veterans
• Surviving Spouses and Dependents
• Women Veterans
• Adaptive Sports Program

DISCOUNT TICKETS to
NOVEMBER EVENTS AT THE I-X CENTER!
Taste, Try & Buy at the Fabulous Food Show!
Start your Holiday Shopping at the I-X Christmas Connection

Look at what the November schedule has in store for you and your Military families.

November Events - Discount Tickets

**Fabulous Food Show** – November 14-16 – flyer with link to purchase discount tickets for GA admission which includes the celebrity demos in the Giant Eagle Market District Theatre. NEW LOWER PRICING! Regular Price Admission at the Box Office is $29.99 – Discount Price is $19.99. CLICK HERE to purchase tickets and use promo code MILT

**I-X Christmas Connection** – November 21-23 – your favorite holiday home-made and fine gift craft show is bigger and better than ever! NEW… is the Christmas Story House Feature! Admission at the Box Office is only $11.99 – Discount Price is $9.99 with coupon!

**Breakfast with Santa** on November 22 or 23 – tickets include admission to the I-X Christmas Connection. Order your tickets online with promo code IXBWS. CLICK HERE to purchase tickets and use promo code IXBWS

Discount ticket offers will also be available in 2015 to Great Big Home and Garden Show, I-X PistonPowered Auto-Rama and the I-X Indoor Amusement Park!
Finally... Thanksgiving Reflections: I think we all would agree we have a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. First and foremost if you’re reading this you’re probably home and not deployed. For all who have “been there and done that” we know there are no “bad days” here at home. That being said as we head into Veterans’ Day and the upcoming Holidays let’s not forgot that some of our fellow veterans who although they are home are still struggling with multiple issues. Keep an eye out for them and let’s do what we can “to cover their six.”

Let’s also take a moment to remember all of our service men and women around the world who will spend the holidays manning a post, patrolling a perimeter, or standing a watch. May they all be safe.

And remember too all who have served in ALL conflicts and never returned home to enjoy another holiday season with their families. May they and their families be at peace.

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