

TROOPS TO TEACHERS

December 2010

MISSOURI/IOWA CONSORTIUM

Vol. 5-10



Comprehensive Guide to Missouri Benefits Now Available Online

By Daniel Bell, Public Information, Missouri Veterans Commission

In November, the Missouri Veterans Commission released the first comprehensive guide to military benefits ever produced by the state. The Missouri Benefits and Resource Guide for Veterans and Military provides veterans, military personnel, national guard, reservists and their families with information about benefits available through the state and related services offered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The guide is located on the Veterans Commission website at mvc.dps.mo.gov (click on the link under *Key Messages* on the left side of the page).

During a series of listening posts held throughout Missouri last fall, it was discovered there was no single source for individuals to learn about all of the military benefits offered by the state. With assistance from numerous state agencies, the Veterans Commission has created a guide that will be a great help to veterans and military personnel in Missouri. The guide covers benefits in areas such as education, small business, employment, vehicle licensing and health care. It also contains information from the VA's Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration.

The PDF version available on the Veterans Commission website will be updated as new benefits are released. A limited print run is in development based on budget restrictions.



TTT Progress Report: Oct. 1, 2009, to Sept. 30, 2010

For schools in our state and for veterans looking for a new job as a teacher either here or in Iowa, Missouri's Troops to Teachers (TTT) program was a win-win proposition even in a slow economy.

- During the 2009-10 reporting period, there were 1,151 inquiries through TTT about teaching positions in Missouri (reflected, in part, by the 1,471 veterans who were contacted about registering for the program).
- Teacher placements for 2009-10 included 11 in Missouri and two in Iowa, as identified by the national TTT administration (DANTES).
- Online registration through DANTES continued to provide lots of interest from veterans looking for jobs in Missouri and Iowa. This process directed attention to open teaching

(Continued on the next page)

STAFF

Jefferson City Office
877-530-2765

Chad Schatz
Director

John Hose
Assistant Director

Robert Hess
Supervisor

Ron Marsch
Supervisor

Debbie Butcher
Teacher Certification
Supervisor

Alice Kirsch
Administrative Assistant

St. Louis Office
314-467-5080

Steve Nelle
Supervisor

Mike Bitzenburg
Supervisor

Suzanne Adam
Secretary

Kansas City Office
816-241-1705

Turner Shipman
Supervisor

Leo Blakley
Approval Developer

Sharon Sawyer
Secretary

TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GI BILL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS, CALL 888-442-4551.

TTT Progress Report: Oct. 1, 2009, to Sept. 30, 2010 (Continued)

positions and connected Missouri and Iowa with the best teaching prospects coming out of the military.

- Outreach activities played a vital role in the program's success. Approximately half of the school districts in Missouri were contacted by TTT staff about placing veterans in open teaching positions. (Charter schools also were contacted.) Strategies such as providing retirement seminars; attending veterans retirement briefings, career fairs and meetings with education administrators; and distributing promotional items were all part of the marketing plan. Military bases and recruiting stations also were identified as places where TTT should be promoted. During the reporting period, about 250 informational packets were distributed at military bases and job fairs alone.
- The "Hot List" tool was used to make schools aware of potential hires. The "Hot List" is a compilation of interested veterans and their qualifications; it typically contains 200-300 qualified and registered veterans seeking jobs in Missouri or Iowa. The list is distributed to school administrators on a regular basis.
- The TTT program honored six individuals as Missouri TTT Teachers of the Year in the following categories: Elementary Schools; Female Teacher, Rural Schools; JROTC (two awards given); Male Teacher, Rural Schools; and Urban Schools.

2010 MISSOURI TTT TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



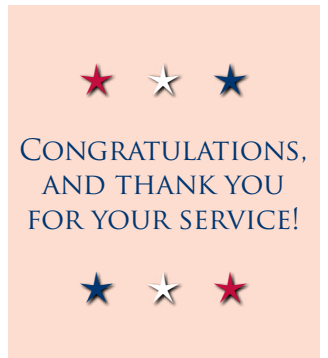
Harry Cunningham, JROTC Co-Teacher of the Year, Smith-Cotton High School, Sedalia School District



Marcus Kemerling, Male Teacher, Rural Schools, Rock Port School District



Dennis Kurtz, Elementary Schools, Seckman Elementary School, Fox School District



Missouri/Iowa Consortium
Chad Schatz, Director
John Hose, Assistant Director

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Veterans Education and Training Section
P.O. Box 480 • Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480
Phone: 877-530-2765 • Fax: 573-526-5710
E-mail: chad.schatz@dese.mo.gov

The national **Troops to Teachers** website
is located at proudtoserveagain.com.

Teacher Certification Contact Information

Iowa

Geri McMahon
Phone: 515-281-5849
E-mail: geri.mcmahon@iowa.gov

Missouri

Debbie Butcher
Phone: 877-530-2765
E-mail: debbie.butcher@dese.mo.gov

In order to qualify for the Troops to Teachers program, a veteran must have at least six years of military service. Most have much more than that.

Often, a TTT veteran is a retiree with at least 20 years of service. This gives the school administrator a dependable teacher for today's challenging school environment.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or Relay Missouri 800-735-2966.

VETERANS EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTION

December 2010

MISSOURI STATE
APPROVING AGENCY

Vol. 5-10

Special Points of Interest

- Suzanne Adam is the new secretary in the Missouri State Approving Agency St. Louis office.
- Shams Chughtai is the new veterans coordinator for the Missouri Division of Workforce Development.

The **Missouri State Approving Agency Directory** features all schools and colleges approved for the GI Bill. Request a copy by calling **877-530-2765**.

Manufacturing Company in St. James Sponsors Annual Adopt-a-Soldier Program

By Chad Schatz, Director, Missouri State Approving Agency

For the past eight years, soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq have looked forward to packages sent from Tacony Manufacturing in St. James.

Led by Nancy Montgomery, director of human resources, the company's adopt-a-soldier program seeks out donations of gifts that can be packaged and delivered overseas. Tacony Manufacturing pays for all shipping costs. Gift recipients are relatives of employees who work for Tacony Manufacturing, which is a primary employer in the St. James area and manufactures "Made in the USA" vacuum cleaners.

"We receive a 'wish list' from the soldiers, and we respond to that list," Montgomery said. "Some people donate cash, allowing us to purchase items wanted, and others give packaged items such as personal hygiene products, nonperishable foods, woolen socks, long underwear, lip balm and sunscreen."

The program is not just a Christmas effort. Packages ship monthly throughout the year and are always appreciated.

"The female soldiers especially like hair care products, body wash and hand sanitizer," Montgomery said. "Coffee and hot chocolate are popular as well. Aerosols cans and chocolates are not suitable for shipment."

The company receives phone calls, pictures and letters from soldiers who receive the gifts. Some even say thanks in person. Army Capt. Wendy Hampton, sister of employee Vicky Martin, stopped in to show her gratitude after her deployment in Iraq.

"During our weekly meeting, Capt. Hampton greeted Tacony employees and personally thanked us by presenting our company with a flag that had flown at her base in Iraq," Montgomery said.

Anyone wanting to donate can call Montgomery at 573-265-0500, ext. 4310.



Tacony Corporation, with facilities in St. James and St. Louis, has sponsored an adopt-a-soldier program for the past eight years. The Missouri State Approving Agency recently made a donation at the St. James plant. Pictured left to right are Chad Schatz, MSAA director; Rob Vrenick, a 20-year Navy veteran and plant employee through the Veterans Affairs on-the-job training program; and Nancy Montgomery, director of human resources.

Meet Suzanne Adam, Secretary, St. Louis MSAA Office

In November, Suzanne Adam began working as secretary in the Missouri State Approving Agency St. Louis office. She has more than 10 years of general/clinical administrative assistant experience. Adam and her husband are involved in the Midwest Café Racing Association, a motorcycle racing organization. She also is part owner in Idaho Opportunities LLC, a home rehabilitation business that was established in 2008. Adam's interests include healthy cooking programs and stray dog rescue.



Suzanne Adam

Meet Shams Chughtai, Veterans Coordinator, Division of Workforce Development

Shams Chughtai is the new veterans coordinator for the Missouri Division of Workforce Development. He served in the Missouri National Guard from 1996-2006 including an 18-month tour at Fort Bragg, N.C. He re-enlisted in the Army reserve in 2008 and was stationed in Bagram, Afghanistan, as a contracting officer representative. In his current position, Chughtai oversees programs relating to the employment of Missouri veterans. He can be contacted via e-mail at shams.chughtai@ded.mo.gov.



Shams Chughtai

VA Medical Centers in Missouri

COLUMBIA

800 Hospital Drive
573-814-6000

KANSAS CITY

4801 Linwood Blvd.
816-861-4700 or
800-525-1483

POPLAR BLUFF

1500 N. Westwood Blvd.
573-686-4151

ST. LOUIS

Jefferson Barracks
Jefferson Barracks Drive
314-652-4100 or
800-228-5459

ST. LOUIS

John Cochran Division
915 N. Grand Blvd.
314-652-4100 or
800-228-5459



The Missouri State Approving Agency recently held a meeting in St. Louis with Avis McFarland (left), VA education liaison representative. Also pictured: Mike Bitzenburg (center), supervisor, St. Louis; and Turner Shipman (right), supervisor, Kansas City.

VETERANS EDUCATION IN ACTION



John Hose (left), MSA assistant director, talks to a veteran at the recent Missouri National Guard Yellow Ribbon Career Fair at the Blue Top Armory in Jefferson City.



Louise Wright (left), VA regional office education officer, speaks with Ben Miller (right) at the recent Missouri Veterans Commission town hall meeting at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Miller is the veterans officer for the UMSL student veterans organization.

**TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS,
OR TO SEE HOW MUCH YOUR ENTITLEMENT IS, CALL 888-442-4551.**