



Wounded Warrior Voice

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WHAT'S NEW: AW2 Community Support Network

By Sarah Greer, Stratcom

The primary goal of the AW2 Community Support Network is to connect AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families with caring organizations that can help them transition to life post-injury.

The impact supporters have on Soldiers, Veterans, and Families is difficult to measure; in fact, it is priceless. Participants in the AW2 Community Support Network are organizations that offer a wide variety of services to AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families as they adjust to their new normal.

The AW2 Community Support Network is off to a strong start. So far, 78 organizations have registered to demonstrate their support for wounded warriors and their Families. AW2 is working to post each organization to the AW2 Web site as quickly as possible at <http://www.AW2.army.mil/supporters/index.html>.

Any AW2 Soldier, Veteran, or Family member may recommend an organization for the AW2 Community Support Network. To recommend an organization, please e-mail Sarah Greer at AW2CommunitySupportNetwork@conus.army.mil.

CAREER & EDUCATION: Everyone Should Have a Mentor

By Rose Marie Tinker, Career Coordinator

According to Webster's Dictionary a "mentor" is a wise and faithful counselor or monitor. The longer I work for the federal government the more I'm convinced that everyone needs a mentor. This is especially true for AW2 Soldiers entering the workforce after months and sometimes years of healing and rehabilitation and for spouses who have stayed home to raise children or support their spouses during their recovery.

According to Pat Williams and Jim Denney, from their "Secrets of Success" article, there are 10 ways to select a mentor. They are:

1. Look at the people you know

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2. Consider people you've never met
 3. Select a mentor who is a good role model
 4. Select a mentor who is a good listener
 5. Select a mentor who levels with you
 6. Look for someone who is unlike you in some important way
 7. Be open to finding a mentor in unlikely places
 8. If the person doesn't know you, approach that person with a brief letter of introduction
 9. Make personal contact
 10. Remember, you are never too old to be mentored

AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Family members have two additional ways to obtain a mentor. They can ask their AW2 Advocate for assistance or ask their Advocate to contact the AW2 Career and Education Section for assistance.

It's never too late to find a mentor and it's definitely never too early to do so either. While becoming a protégé does not guarantee advancement in a career, it may lead to more informed decisions about the future through learning about the mentor's life and career lessons.

Information is power and becoming a protégé may make an individual a more powerful person in their workplace and career field. Information on the Army Mentorship Program may be found at <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/mentorship/>.

CAREER: Illegal and Legal Job Interview Questions

Federal, state, and local laws regulate the questions a prospective employer may ask. An employer's questions must be related to the job. Many illegal questions are about nationality, religion, age, marital and Family status, gender, health and physical abilities, and transportation. The best option when asked an illegal question is to examine the intent behind the question and respond with an answer as it might apply to the job. For an example, an illegal question is, "Do you have any disabilities?" If the interviewer thoroughly described the job, the legal version of that question is, "Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations?" Visit the links below to read more about what the differences between illegal and legal interview questions and how to respond during an interview:

<http://www.usatoday.com/careers/resources/interviewillegal.htm>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8963-2003Apr11.html>

<http://www.hrworld.com/features/30-interview-questions-111507/>

MONEY MATTERS: Homeowners Assistance Program

The program is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed in February and is designed to partially reimburse those whose service to the nation has required them to relocate and sell their primary residence at a loss. Those eligible include active and former servicemembers. For more information, see <http://hap.usace.army.mil>.

MONEY MATTERS: Personal Financial Management Programs

Financial Readiness Program in the Army is a personal financial management program. These programs can help you keep your finances in good shape and

provide counselors who can help you save for the future, improve your credit, and resolve financial problems. The military's personal financial management programs can help you learn how to reduce debt, save more, and keep your finances in order. They can also help you get on your feet, start investing for the future, and be more financially sound.

You can locate your closest Personal Financial Manager (PFM) by going to Military Installations at <http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=MI:ENTRY:2770748051513324>.

BENEFITS: Preferred Payment In The Annual CRSC/CRDP Open Season

Retirees eligible for both Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payment (CRDP) and Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) can choose the preferred payment in the annual CRSC/CRDP open season. Federal law states eligible retirees can receive either CRDP or CRSC; not both. Each December, eligible retirees receive a CRDP/CRSC open season election form. The form includes a comparison of the CRDP and CRSC entitlement amounts, as well as information about the collection actions and taxes.

The retiree needs to return the form only if making a change. No action is required to keep things the way they are. The open season ends on January 31. If you have questions on the open season, you can call (800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955 from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.

Submitting a claim for CRSC just got easier for retired Soldiers, thanks to a new toll-free fax number (877) 368-9208. For more information about CRSC, retirees can visit the Army's CRSC Web site at www.crsc.army.mil, e-mail crsc.info@us.army.mil, or call (866) 281-3254. SOURCE: ECHOES, Sept-Dec 2009

MEDICAL BENEFITS: Special Monthly Compensation for Eligible Women Veterans

A special review was conducted of all records of women Veterans granted service connection for injury or disease of the breast and/or reproductive system. The review, completed on April 16, 2009, yielded the names of 1,769 women Veterans who were granted service connection for mastectomy under diagnostic code 7626 and/or hysterectomy under diagnostic codes 7617, 7618, and 7619, but are not receiving special monthly compensation (SMC) as warranted under 38 U.S.C. § 1114(k)/38 C.F.R. § 3.350(a).

If you have questions about these benefits, please contact your local VA, your AW2 Advocate, or AW2 Medical Operations at AW2medicaloperations@conus.army.mil.

VA UPDATE: Emergency Education Benefit Payments on VA Web Site

The VA's 57 regional benefits offices are processing on-the-spot emergency payments up to \$3,000 to students who have applied for their education benefits but who have not yet received a government payment. Veteran-students can

request courtesy transportation to VA regional benefits offices or can now apply online at www.va.gov. The online application will guide Veterans through the process to supply needed information. Online applicants will receive their emergency payments through the mail after processing.

The emergency checks are an advance on each student's education benefits, and the amount will be deducted from future benefits payments. Checks will be written at the regional offices for Veterans who bring a photo ID and evidence of their enrollment. VA officials emphasize that \$3,000 is the maximum payment, with many Veterans receiving smaller payments based upon their likely monthly education benefits.

A map and list of the participating VA regional benefits offices is available on at http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flash.asp?dnum=3. For more information regarding VA issuing emergency checks, visit <http://www.va.gov>.

VA UPDATE: VA Mistakenly Sends ALS Letters to Veterans

VA sent notification letters to Veterans with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) advising them of their potential eligibility for disability compensation benefits. On August 13, 2009, VA sent outreach letters to 1,864 Veterans and survivors across the country. Unfortunately, VA made a coding error and a number of Veterans who should not have received this letter did. The Department is reviewing individual claims files for all the recipients of this letter to identify those who received it by mistake. VA employees are calling Veterans and survivors to ensure that they understand the purpose of the letter, explain why they mistakenly received the letter, and express VA's sincere apologies for the distress caused by this unfortunate and regrettable error. For more information, visit http://www1.va.gov/opa/vafeature/als_statement.asp.

FAMILY: New DoD Online Library Resources

New library databases purchased this year greatly enriched the online library content to military servicemembers and Families, regardless of where they live or are stationed. Over the Internet you can borrow, read, and return library materials 24 hours a day/7 days a week. These databases are easily assessable at several military portals including Military OneSource and AKO. The databases offer downloadable e-books and audio books in various subject areas, test preparation including practice tests, resume and college planning, auto repair guides/schematics, home and small engine repair (lawn mowers, motor bikes, etc.) and children's e-books and audio/video material in various languages for reading/listening pleasure and comprehension support.

AW2 SOLDIER STORIES

To find out what has been in the news about AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and staff, visit the AW2 Blog on Mondays for the weekly digest of those stories at <http://AW2.armylive.dodlive.mil>.

THE BLOG UPDATE: October

AW2 Veteran Throws First Pitch of World Series

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/29/aw2-veteran-throws-first-pitch-of-world-series/>

DoD Features AW2 Veteran Joe Beimfohr

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/29/dod-features-aw2-veteran-joe-beimfohr/>

AW2 Veteran Wins '40 Under 40' Award

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/29/aw2-veteran-wins-40-under-40-award/>

AW2 Weekly Update 10/29-10/23

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/26/aw2-weekly-update-1029-1023/>

5 Tips About Private Sector Jobs

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/23/5-tips-about-private-sector-jobs/>

Real Warriors Campaign Launches New PSAs

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/22/real-warriors-campaign-launches-new-psas/>

5 Benefits of a U.S. Government Job

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/22/5-benefits-of-a-us-government-job/>

GEN Odierno Discusses Operation Proper Exit

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/21/gen-odierno-discusses-operation-proper-exit/>

Top 5 Tips for Professional Social Networking

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/21/top-5-tips-for-professional-social-networking/>

Top 5 Tips for Interview Success

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/20/top-5-tips-for-interview-success/>

AW2 Weekly Digest 10/12-10/16

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/19/aw2-weekly-digest-1012-1016/>

How to Start a Career Search

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/19/how-to-start-a-career-search/>

Welcome to the AW2 Employment Series

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/19/welcome-to-the-aw2-employment-series/>

Community Comes Together for a Purple Heart

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/16/community-comes-together-for-a-purple-heart/>

AW2 Weekly Digest 09/28-10/09

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/13/aw2-weekly-digest-0928-1009/>

AW2 at AUSA 2009

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/09/aw2-at-the-association-of-the-united-states-army/>

Scams Target Soldiers, Veterans, and Families

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/09/scams-target-soldiers-veterans-and-families/>

National Depression Screening Day

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/08/national-depression-screening-day/>

Soldier Discusses Suicide Prevention

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/07/soldier-discusses-suicide-prevention/>

Help for Veterans with Post 9/11 G.I. Bill

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2009/10/07/help-for-veterans-with-post-911-gi-bill/>

AW2 Weekly Digest 08/24-08/28

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/31/AW2-Weekly-Digest-0824-0828.aspx>

AW2 Veteran Richard Ranno Thriving as a Federal Employee in Germany

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/28/AW2-Veteran-Richard-Ranno-Thriving-as-a-Federal-Employee-in-Germany.aspx>

Groundbreaking on New Level I Polytrauma Center

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/27/Groundbreaking-on-New-Level-I-Polytrauma-Center.aspx>

AFPS Launches Family Matters Blog

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/26/AFPS-Launches-Family-Matters-Blog.aspx>

Tell the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs What You Think

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/26/Tell-the-Chairman-of-the-Joint-Chiefs-What-You-Think.aspx>

New In-State Tuition Law for Military Families

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/25/New-In-State-Tuition-Law-for-Military-Families.aspx>

AW2 Weekly Digest 08/17-08/21

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/24/AW2-Weekly-Digest-0817-821.aspx>

AW2 Education Initiative at KU Announces Fall 2010 Application Process

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/19/AW2-Education-Initiative-at-KU-Announces-Fall-2010-Application-Process.aspx>

AW2 Weekly Digest 08/10-08/14

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/17/AW2-Weekly-Digest-0810-0814.aspx>

A Day at Walter Reed

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/14/A-Day-at-Walter-Reed.aspx>

AW2 Weekly Digest 08/03-08/07

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/07/AW2-Weekly-Digest-0803-0807.aspx>

Summer Activities for Wounded Warriors

<https://www.aw2.army.mil/blog/post/2009/08/04/Summer-Activities-for-Wounded-Warriors-Accessible-Sailing-in-Boston-MA.aspx>

AW2 ADVOCATES IN THE FIELD: Margarita Aponte, Advocate for Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands

Margarita Aponte has served as an AW2 Advocate since July 1, 2009, and is assigned to serve the warriors in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. She retired from the Army after serving 30 years on active duty as an Army Nurse Corps officer. She served for four years as the Commander of the Health Clinic at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. Her experience with mobilization and demobilization of troops in Puerto Rico and her personal deployment to the Gulf War together with her husband's deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) bring the compassion, caring, and professionalism that the Soldiers of Puerto Rico deserve for as long as it takes. Margarita is located at the community based WTU, Building 225 at Fort Buchanan and can be reached at (787) 707-2696 or via e-mail: margarita.aponte@us.army.mil. Margarita Aponte está sirviendo como una red de apoyo del programa "Guerreros Heridos Militares" por sus siglas en ingles "Army Wounded Warrior (AW2)" desde Julio 1, 2009, asignada a servir nuestros guerreros en Puerto Rico e Islas Virgenes. Margarita se retiró del Army despues de servir 30 años activos como oficial del Cuerpo de Enfermeras Militares (ANC). Sirvió por 4 años como Comander de la Clinica: "Rodriguez Army Health Clinic" localizada en Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. Su experiencia con mobilizaciones y demobilizaciones de la tropas puertorriqueñas, como tambien su experiencia personal de haber servido en la Guerra del Golfo (Gulf War) y la de su esposo quien sirvió en la Guerra de Iraq (OIF/OEF) brindan un acumulo de profesionalismo, compasion, y carisma que los Soldados de Puerto Rico e islas Virgenes se merecen, por el tiempo que sea necesario. Margarita esta localizada en los edificios del CBWTU, Edificio 225, FT Buchanan, Puerto Rico. También puede ser contactada por teléfono al: (787) 707-2696 o via e-mail: margarita.aponte@us.army.mil.

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U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)

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