



# PUTNAM VETERAN'S REGISTER

An E-mail Newsletter of the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency

The evening of August 16 served as an overwhelming reminder that while we are reveling in over the last few weeks of summer and contemplating a virtual smorgasbord of electoral choices this fall we are still a country at war. Many have forgotten that fact but not those of the West Point community.

My good friend Charlie Miller, Past District #2 Commander and I made the sobering sojourn to the tiny village of Highland Falls to attend the wake of Major Thomas Kennedy who was killed in action in Eastern Afghanistan on August 8, 2012. We arrived at the funeral home at 6:30 PM. Quickly we joined the line just in front of eight newly minted lieutenants all who had served with the Major when he was assigned to West Point, behind us was a twice deployed Army Capitan of Infantry who had also served with the Major. We were among our heroes. There were generals, sergeants, cadets and civilians in that long and winding line. At 10:30 PM Charlie and I were finally able to offer our condolences to his family. His wife, mother and father, brothers, mother-in-law and father-in-law and a number of other family members soldiered on to greet all. There was at least another hour of mourners following us. Both of us would have stood in that line for several more hours to do the right thing. This is the very least we can do for our fallen heroes.

What struck us was the unwavering support the soldiers we spoke to gave their mission in defense of our nation. While we expressed hope that they would not have to go to war they all gave us assurance that going to war was what they did and they do it with pride. His father quietly told us that his son died doing what he loved; in command of troops in battle.

May God Bless his family and may God Bless the troops.

*Harold Rohde, Director*



**Kennedy's Angels**  
**Organizer : James Finn**  
**This Fundraiser ends on : 9/9/2012**  
**Beneficiary : Thomas Kennedy Family**

This money will be given to Tommy's family to help support and educate his two beautiful little angels.

This site has been established to accept donations on behalf of the family that fallen American hero, Major Thomas Kennedy, leaves behind. All proceeds from this site will be directly deposited into a private trust being established for Major Kennedy's two young children.

On Wednesday August 8, 2012 while on foot patrol in Eastern Afghanistan, Major Kennedy was killed by a Taliban suicide bomber. Major Kennedy is a hero of the highest order having given the ultimate sacrifice to his nation. As a nation we grieve the loss of such a distinguished warrior. As a community we will miss the many contributions Major Kennedy made to make our homes a better place to live. As a family, we will greatly miss our Tommy.

Through the generous contributions of the community, this site is in place to ensure the children of Major Kennedy will receive the necessary educational opportunities to follow in the footsteps of their father. Major Kennedy was a graduate of the West Point Military Academy ('00) and earned a Masters Degree from Columbia University ('10). Major Kennedy greatly valued education and would want to see his children provided the opportunity to understand this value.

In Major Kennedy's memory, a FaceBook community page has been established:

<https://www.facebook.com/?ref=logo#!/MajorThomasKennedyMemorial>

On behalf of Major Kennedy's family, friends, classmates, and fellow servicemen – thank you for your support.



## THE VOW TO HIRE HEROES ACT OF 2011

### NEW BENEFITS FOR UNEMPLOYED VETERANS

*With the historic unemployment rates that impact veterans above the national average it is vital that this information gets to veterans seeking jobs*

#### VETERANS MAY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL EDUCATION BENEFITS.

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) offers 12 months of retraining assistance to Veterans who are:

- Unemployed
- At least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- Not eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g., the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment)
- Not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability (IU)
- Not enrolled in a federal or state job training program
- Enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school

The program is limited to **45,000 participants** from July 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, and to **54,000 participants** from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. Participants may receive up to 12 months of assistance at the full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty program (currently **\$1,473 per month**). The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certification, and train the Veteran for a high demand occupation.

Visit [www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP](http://www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP) to learn more and read frequently asked questions about VRAP. More details about VRAP, including information on how to apply, will be published at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) as they become available.

#### VETERANS WITH A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY MAY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Veterans who previously completed a VA vocational rehabilitation program and have used the initial 26 weeks of unemployment benefits may qualify for an additional 12 months of VA vocational rehabilitation benefits.

- You must have previously completed a VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program and been considered "rehabilitated" by VA.
- You must apply within six months of using up your initial 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. You may still qualify for extended or emergency unemployment benefits.
- You can apply now, but cannot start any education or training until June 1, 2012 and you must apply to VA by March 31, 2014.

VA may offer incentive payments to encourage employers to hire and train program participants.

- VA may be able to reimburse an employer up to one-half your annual salary for 6 months or longer
- This can provide you with a competitive advantage with employers
- You must apply and qualify for VA vocational rehabilitation benefits prior to being hired

To apply or learn more information about vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits please call 1-800-827-1000, visit the [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and fill out an online application (VONAPP), or Complete VA Form 28-1900, *Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation*, and submit it to the nearest VA Regional Office.

Please continue to check [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for changes and updates to the VOW to Hire Hero Act programs and benefits. Last updated on 02/27/2012.



U.S. Department  
of Labor

U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# 2012 Veterans Job Fair Hire a Hero Initiative

Hosted by

**Empire City Casino**

810 Yonkers Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704

**Thursday, August 23, 2012 • 11am-3pm**

**3rd Floor in the Good Time Room**

**Veterans must present their DD214 or military identification, along with a valid government-issued photo ID, to participate in the job fair. This job fair is open to veterans only. No exceptions.**

**More than 40 tri-state area employers with jobs to fill will be on hand!**

**Allen Health Care, Applebee's, Bally Technologies, Coca-Cola Refreshments, Cumulus Radio, Deb Romain Consulting LLC, Durante Rentals, Empire City Casino, Empire Merchants, Everest Merchant Services, Family Services of Westchester, Food Bank of Westchester, Global Linguist Solutions, Hilti, Jericho Project, Lincoln Hall, Mahopac National Bank, Manhattan Beer Distributors, MTA Metro North Railroad, MTA NYC Transit, Northern Westchester Hospital, New York Post, North Shore LIJ, Pace University, Platinum Lending Services, Pondfield Trip Service, Prudential Financial, Purchase Park 2 Fly, Renaissance Westchester Hotel, SEI Aaron's Inc., Southern New York Association, Strategies for Wealth, US Dept of Veterans Affairs, WCS/Bronx Zoo, Westchester Square Plumbing Supply Co., Inc., WESTMED Medical Group, White Plains Hospital, YAI – Network.**

## For Employers

Tax credits and other incentives for employers to hire and train Veterans who are unemployed or have service-connected disabilities.

## Are You An Employer Interested in Tax Credit Information?



The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit available to private-sector businesses and certain non-profit organizations for hiring certain individuals, including veterans, who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. The WOTC program enables the targeted employees to gradually move from economic dependency into self-sufficiency as they earn a steady income, while participating employers are able to reduce their federal income tax liability. See the WOTC [Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

## Are You An Employer Interested in Hiring Veterans?

The Special Employer Incentives (SEI) program is for eligible Veterans that face extraordinary obstacles to obtaining employment. Veterans are hired by participating employers at the onset of the SEI program and employment is expected to continue following successful completion of the SEI program. As a result, the SEI program is beneficial for both employers and Veterans.

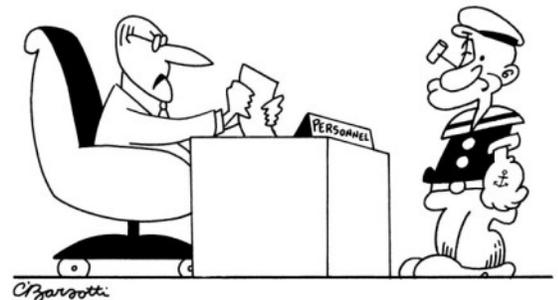
Reimbursement up to 50% of Veteran's Salary during the SEI program to cover:

- o Additional expenses incurred for cost of instruction
- o Loss of production
- o Additional supplies and equipment
- Hire qualified Veterans trained to your agency's specifications
- Hire a trainee at an apprenticeship wage
- VA provides the necessary tool, equipment, uniforms and other supplies
- Appropriate accommodations are made based on individual needs
- Minimal paperwork required by the employer
- The employer has VA support during training and placement follow-up phase to assist with work or training related needs

To speak with a Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment representative,

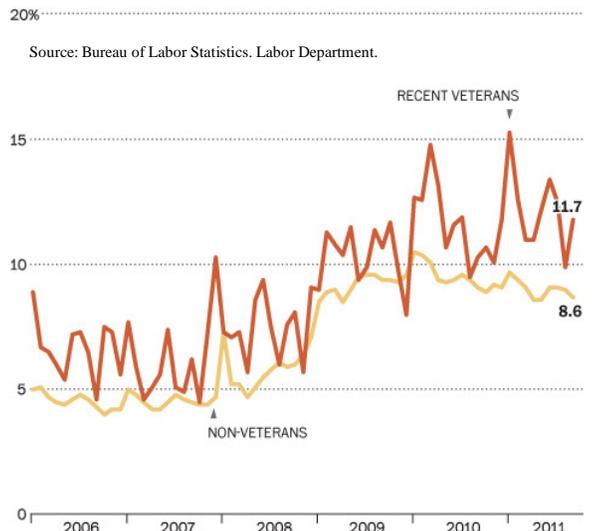
- Call VA at 1-800-827-1000 and ask to speak with the Vocational Rehabilitation Division or Point of Contact.
- Locate a VA Regional Office near you using the VA Regional Office Directory

For Additional Employer Resources Visit [CareerOneStop](#) for Employers



*"I yam what I yam an' tha's all I yam!" What the bell kind of résumé is that?"*

Unemployment among recent veterans is higher than for non-veterans.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Department.



# **Samaritan Village, Inc.**

## **WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM**

Building on 51 Years Experience in Chemical Dependency Treatment and 16 Years Experience in Veterans-Specific Treatment

- ◆ Comprehensive Treatment in a Beautiful Residential Setting
- ◆ Individualized Treatment Planning
- ◆ Intensive Case Management
- ◆ Trauma-informed Care
- ◆ Gender-informed Care
- ◆ Veterans Culture
- ◆ Health & Wellness Services
- ◆ Mental Health/ MST & PTSD Treatment Services
- ◆ Family Reunification Services
- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- ◆ Individualized Discharge Planning
- ◆ Licensed by NY State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services



*Located on the grounds of the Samaritan Village campus in Ellenville, NY*

**FOR INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A REFERRAL:**

- Jackie Samuels, Assistant Director, Women Veterans Program: 845-647-8006 x3194
- Thomas LaBarca, Director, Admissions Department: 718-657-6195

**SAMARITAN VILLAGE, INC.**

Tino Hernandez, President, CEO

Roy Kearse, L.C.S.W., C.A.S.A.C., Vice President, Residential Treatment (718-206-2000 x1256)

Carol Davidson, L.C.S.W., C.A.S.A.C., Senior Director of Veterans Services (212-333-5445)

Amy Larmon, L.C.S.W.-R, Program Director, Women Veterans Program (845-647-8006 x3193)



## Hearing Loss Due to Military Acoustic Trauma

**BY-**  
**Brennan Mahoney**  
 State Veterans' Counselor  
 bmahoney@veterans.ny.gov  
 Castle Point VAMC  
 (T, W, TH)  
 PO Box 633, Bldg 19,  
 Rm C210  
 Castle Point, NY 12511  
 845-831-2000 x5449  
 Putnam Veterans Service Agency (M & F)  
 110 Old Route 6, Bldg 3  
 Carmel, NY 10512  
 845-808-1620

One of the most common conditions one can file a service connected disability claim for, is for

Hearing Loss due to military acoustic trauma. With this condition, one must first indicate to VA (read: prove), that they suffered one or more instances of loud noises while in service. Then, the veteran must have a current chronic diagnosis of the conditions of hearing loss and tinnitus. Tinnitus is a 'ringing' or 'buzzing' in the ears, that, likewise, occurred due to the acoustic trauma, or exposure to loud noises. The VA has published a list of most of the military jobs for each branch of service, and lists each as "high," "moderate" or "low" probability of military acoustic trauma. If your MOS is listed as "moderate" or "high" probability, the VA virtually concedes that the hearing loss was

due to the in-service, trauma. This designation, along with a current diagnosis of these conditions, can then lead to a disability benefit award for each condition (hearing loss & tinnitus as separate claimed conditions). So, if you suspect, or even wish to know if your military job was designated as acoustically traumatic, in the eyes of the VA (i.e.: you had a job that involved a lot of loud noises), go see your Veterans Service Officers (VSO) to investigate a possible claim. Then, talk to the VSO, about getting a hearing test thru VA or a private audiologist and write up a statement of your personal military acoustic trauma. Armed with this material you are ready to file a claim for disability with your VSO.



If you use the VA Healthcare system are you aware of the **My HealthVet** website? On it you can:

Keep your information in your VA file up to date:

- Emergency Contacts
- Postal Address
- Phone number(s)
- Email address
- Enter and update your non VA medical history
- Enter and update OTC medications and supplements you take
- Enter and update family health history

Download or track:

- VA Wellness Reminders
- VA Appointments
- VA Allergies
- VA Laboratory Results

**Putnam County Veterans Service Agency**  
 Donald B. Smith  
 Government Campus  
 110 Old Route 6, Building #3  
 Carmel, NY 10512  
 845-808-1620

- DOD Military Service Data
- Refill prescription and track your prescription history.
- Use secure messaging to:
  - Request an appointment at your VA facility
  - Request a medication renewal
  - Ask your healthcare team a question

Maintain Eating and Activity Health Journals. This is especially helpful if your doctor has put you on a strict diet or asked you to keep track of your exercise routine. Both are easy to do using the fill in the blank and dropdown menu templates provided on the website.

The site also provides up to date news about Veterans related health issues. To find out more and register for **My HealthVet** go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

*Art Hanley, Deputy Director*





## **Putnam County Veterans Task Force**

**We're here to listen, learn & assist**

**Thank you for your service and now it is our turn to serve you. The Task Force is a coalition of your community agencies voluntarily working together to identify and address the needs of veterans and military personnel in our community. We can't do it without your voices. Contact us with your input & questions so that we move forward together. Dept of VA - Putnam County Veterans Service Agency**

**PARC/Brain Injury Programs -Visiting Nurse Services- Mental Health/Dept of Social Services**

**Welcome Home**