



## **THE VRC EAGLE NEWSLETTER**

### **March 2006**

Thank you for your support and interest in the Veterans Resource Central (VRC). Every other month, we bring you an update on the progress that the Veterans Resource Central is making.

**What is the VRC?** Veterans Resource Central (VRC), a Pennsylvania nonprofit organization, provides transition assistance to returning veterans, active duty military and their families through a corps of volunteers and Internet tools. We provide education, information and guidance to veterans transitioning to civilian life, to military families dealing with life issues at home and to active duty or recently returned military planning for civilian careers.

#### **Featured Stories**

- [From the President](#)
- [VRC Easter Celebration](#)
- [Mentor Program Update](#)
- [Family Center News](#)
- [Marketing Update](#)
- [Comments](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Spotlight On...](#)

## I. FROM THE PRESIDENT (John Carrigan)

This spring, the VRC board will focus on strategic planning and then on execution. We established a number of goals that will drive our activity in the next few months. First, our initial endeavor to act as mentors for veterans graduating from college in the spring is off to a good start. We recruited and trained the mentors, introduced them to their assigned students and have them actively working the first group of fifteen students. The process is working and we foresee continued growth in the coming years. We agreed that this is an activity that we will expand to other schools in the region the balance of the year. Additionally, forty businesses will actively support the VRC's efforts, and we just reached an agreement with the Human Resource Professionals of Central PA to assist us in obtaining support from all of their 350 members.

A technology committee has formed and they are focused on developing a Web-based, secure project management platform and database to support our career counseling and job placement effort.

To enhance our services to the veterans, we started putting together a team of attorneys to provide pro-bono support to the veterans and/or their families. Currently five attorneys signed up.

Also, we are working with several banks to roll out financial counseling and debt consolidation guidance programs for our veteran community.

The board is energized with each board member committed to work on at least one major project. Our most important goal continues to be resource development. We need to establish an office hire at least one full time staff member to provide immediate response to our volunteers and veteran applicants seeking assistance. We intend to accomplish this priority goal during 2006 and seek volunteers with expertise to assist us with grant writing and event planning. Please contact Barbara Groce at [bgroce@sovereignbank.com](mailto:bgroce@sovereignbank.com) to learn more or offer to help.

## II. ANNOUNCING: VRC Easter Celebration for Deployed Military Families

Veterans Resource Central (VRC) FamilyCenter along with our sponsors invites **deployed military families** and their children of an Easter celebration. Saturday, April 8, 2006, 5:00 - 6:30 pm. The event and activities are free. Visit us online for [details](#).

Interested? Attendance is limited to the first 25 families. [Click here to register](#). Registration must be received no later than **Saturday, April 1**. Questions? Contact Frank 991-3984 or [frankthebiff@aol.com](mailto:frankthebiff@aol.com).

### III. MENTOR PROGRAM UPDATE (CareerCenter)

I wanted to share with you that we've had our first successes with the VRC Mentor Program.

Tania Srouji, US Army, HACC. Mentored by J. Lowing, BeneVis Marketing. Hired by PPO&S, Harrisburg. March 2006

Christina Dorris, US Air Force, Duquesne University. Mentored by A Deeter Gallaher, ADG Marketing. Hired by Pitney Bowes, March 2006.

These are the beginning, of what we intend to be the placement of many veterans in meaningful jobs in central PA.

### IV. FAMILY CENTER NEWS (Frank Piacine)

*This information may be useful for Service members and their families.*

#### **Airline Club Access for Deployed Troops**

U.S. military men and women who are participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom are welcome to be guests of American Airlines at Admirals Club facilities between flights when they are on emergency or Rest and Relaxation (R&R) leave from their overseas duties. This invitation for complimentary access has been extended through June 1, 2006 at all airport locations that do not have USO facilities. Eligible military personnel in appropriate uniform need only present their emergency or R&R leave forms from Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom to access an Admirals Club location. In addition, the Admirals Club welcomes family members and relatives accompanying military personnel who are part of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

#### **American Airlines Extends Special Fares**

American Airlines has extended several special offers to active-duty members of the U.S. military through June 1, 2006. These exclusive offers include discounted airfares, relaxed advance purchase requirements and preferred boarding privileges. Active-duty members of the U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, National Guard and Reserves who are on leave or furlough (including those who are traveling within seven days of discharge from active service), and their spouse and dependent children, are eligible for the special military fares. The discounted military fares may be purchased up to a week after reservations are made. Travel arrangements can be made at American Airlines ticketing locations or by calling American's reservations number at 1-800-433-7300 (en Español 1-800-633-3711) within the United States and Canada. Outside the United States and Canada, call the local reservations number. Military ID must be presented at the time of airport check-in. These military fares are not available via the Internet. Other restrictions, terms and conditions apply.

## V. MARKETING UPDATE (Jeanne Lowing)

The Marketing Committee continues to make progress with the marketing and communications support of the overall organization. This would not be possible without the committed volunteers.

We recently launched our new and improved Web site. One of the new features is that on each page is the ability to e-mail the link or print the page. This is the message that is launched when you select the “e-mail this page” icon:

I thought you might be interested in the Veterans Resource Central - About the VRC. You can view it at <http://www.veteransresourcecentral.org/about/index.shtml>

Many thanks to Ryan Celesnik, a volunteer that recently joined the Web site team, for all the effort and skill he put into this.

We are an army of volunteers. Special thanks to Stephanie Nace, Frogleg Studios, who designed our new brochure. Many thanks for her dedication, commitment and service over the past year.

The Marketing Committee welcomes Tania Srouji who is helping with writing articles and Shannon O’Neill and Amber Shelton, co-chairs of the Special Events Committee.

We are looking for more individuals to fill key leadership roles in this committee. Currently seeking: Web Site Committee chair, Speakers Bureau Chair and PR/Media Relations chair. If you are interested, please contact Jeanne Lowing at [marketing@veteransresourcecentral.org](mailto:marketing@veteransresourcecentral.org).

### Volunteer Now

Ready to roll up your sleeves and get involved? We need more volunteers in a variety of areas to help us do all that we intend to do. Please go to the Web site, [www.veteransresourcecentral.org](http://www.veteransresourcecentral.org), select the How Can I Help icon and complete an online volunteer form located under the Volunteer Now button.

## VI. Comments...From the War Zone

*“You all are doing some great things for those who are deployed and their families.  
Thanks! Mike”*

Major Mike Goynes

## VII. Events...

Upcoming events include:

Date	Time	Event
4/3/06	9:00 am	First Monday, HACC Entrepreneurial Center
4/6/06	10:00 am	Presentation: PBA Member Services Policy Committee Meeting
4/8/06	5:00 – 6:30 pm	Event: Easter Celebration
4/15/06	12:30 pm	Family Support Seminar, TBD

Know of any upcoming PA events that the VRC should be participating in? Please send information to [marketing@veteransresourcecentral.org](mailto:marketing@veteransresourcecentral.org).

## VIII. Spotlight On...

### Harrisburg University

On November 14, 2005, Harrisburg University received one of its highest honors to date. A student, who was deployed to Iraq during his first week of classes, sent an American Flag and certificate to the University in gratitude of its support during his tour of duty.

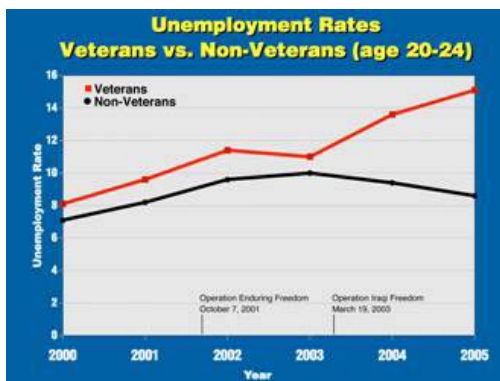
The student was corresponding with Harrisburg U faculty trying to stay abreast of lessons and course material in preparation for his return home and back to Harrisburg U. Harrisburg U instructor of Managing IT Projects, Mr. Penn Lemmonds, stated “As a veteran myself, I appreciate the sacrifice and the dedication of our personnel in uniform. Prior to his departure, the student expressed his desire to complete his Degree here at Harrisburg University. We all wish him a safe return to his family and to the University community.”

Fortunately, the student has safely returned from his tour of duty and is currently attending Spring Semester classes at Harrisburg U. Harrisburg U welcomes our veterans and military, and offers flexible class schedules at a convenient downtown location that keep their needs in mind. Please contact 717.901.5101 or [www.harrisburgu.net](http://www.harrisburgu.net) for more information.

### Major Improvement in Helping Young Veterans Find Work

*In early February, the following news release was released from Washington, DC.*

With a booming national economy and the highest employment levels in six years, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs today called for an urgent and better effort to help those returning from the war on terror find work.



According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rate for veterans ages 20-24 was over 15 percent in July 2005, while non veterans in that same age category have an unemployment rate of just under 8 percent.

The comments of [Chairman Larry Craig](#) (R-Idaho) came at a hearing Thursday concerning the high unemployment rate for young veterans – those ages 20 to 24. Veterans in that age range now have an unemployment rate of over 15 percent – nearly twice the rate of their non-veteran peers.

The numbers of young unemployed veterans has grown dramatically since the start of military operations in Afghanistan, and that trend caused Craig to express frustration to the Department of Labor’s Assistant Secretary for [Veterans' Employment and Training](#), Charles Ciccolella. His agency plans to provide \$162 million in federal grants to state agencies this year to help veterans find work.

Witnesses at the hearing joined the chairman in expressing serious concerns about whether those funds will be used to help veterans most in need – particularly recently separated veterans’ find jobs. For more information, [veterans.senate.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Newsroom.PressReleases&id=443](http://veterans.senate.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Newsroom.PressReleases&id=443)

\*

\*

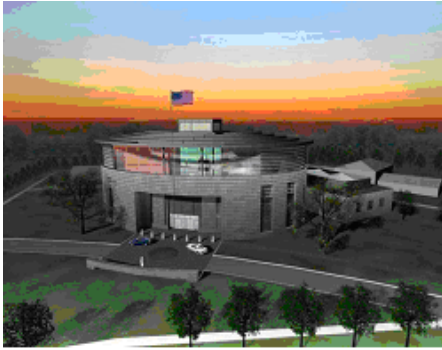
\*

\*

\*

*This information was provided by Bill Homer.*

### **Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund Overview**



To date over **15,000 men and women have been wounded** in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The more severely injured personnel are transferred to military hospitals in the U.S. While some of these troops are ultimately returned to duty, some suffer injuries so severe that they require extensive medical care, years of treatment and rehabilitation, and they are medically discharged from the armed forces. Their future quality of life, their ability to care for themselves and provide for their families, and their very survival depends on the treatment, rehabilitation and advanced training skills they receive following their injury.

The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund is constructing a world-class state-of-the-art training skills facility at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The center will serve military personnel who have been disabled in the normal performance of their duties, combat and non-combat related. This facility will serve not only those injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also veterans injured in prior conflicts and service members critically injured in non-combat operations.

The Center will encompass a 60,000 square foot structure, providing ample space and facilities for the rehabilitation needs of the patients and their caregivers. It will include \$35 million in top-of-the-line indoor and outdoor facilities, a child-care center, and other needed facilities.

This Facility will be presented by the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund to all five military branches and to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Bill Homer  
Retired United States Navy Veteran

“As Veterans, The Only Way To Make A Difference, Is To Get Involved!”

\* \* \* \* \*

For more information about the VRC, contact John Carrigan at <mailto:jacarrigan@veteransresourcecentral.org> or Barbara Groce at [BGroce@sovereignbank.com](mailto:BGroce@sovereignbank.com). Until our next issue, we thank you for your continued support,

Jennifer A Carrigan, Newsletter Editor  
and the VRC Team