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Job fair assists veterans and their spouses

Military veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are returning to the states highly trained but not necessarily with the skills needed to enter the civilian job market.

These men and women, along with any other veterans, and spouses of active-duty military personnel will be able to get help either with training to convert those skills or finding employment at the "Salute Our Heroes" Veterans Job Fair in Tampa. The event will be held 11 a.m.-4 p.m., July 11, at the University of South Florida Sun Dome, 4202 E. Fowler Ave.

Close to 18,000 service members have returned wounded from the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, with about 2,000 of them severely injured, said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Arthur F. "Chip" Diehl III, who is helping to promote the job fair.

"We need to keep them on the scope of America," Diehl said. "America needs to put our arms around those folks."

There will be more than 40 companies and agencies at the job fair taking resumes and offering employment help in a five-county area that includes Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Veterans and spouses of active-duty military personnel also can attend workshops and seminars on such subjects as resume writing or resources to pursue a new career.

Those with resumes can have them critiqued by associates of career consultant Wendy S. Enelow, who wrote "Expert Resumes For Military To Civilian Transitions."

"We'll be offering some strategies for resume writing," Enelow said.

She said at past job fairs, veterans seemed "thrilled to get objective feedback on their resumes."

Michael Garcia, the work-force service manager for Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, said his organization will be at the fair to offer assistance in placement and training.

The work-force alliance, which works with Hillsborough County employers, has helped 1,638 veterans find employment or training.

"When they go through our training, veterans have benefited with jobs starting at \$19-\$20 an hour," Garcia said.

He emphasized the importance of spouses of active-duty military personnel attending the job fair.

"A lot of military spouses have loved ones overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other places, such as South Korea," he said. "And we can't forget the citizen soldiers of the National Guard and reserves - their families are not accustomed to being without one of the wage-earners missing."

For more information on the job fair or to pre-register, go <http://nytimes.com/saluteourheroes>.

For more information about Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance go to cnudi@heraldtoday.com.

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Find www.workforcetampa.com. At that site, veterans can follow the link to deposit a resume.

Another Web site Garcia recommended is <http://www.employflorida.com/>

VETS meeting

The Manatee County Veterans Council will hold a meeting on the VETS program for middle and high school teachers and members of the school board.

The meeting will be at 8 a.m. July 18 at Braden River Middle School, 6215 River Club Blvd.

The VETS, or Veterans Educate Today's Students program, provides school teachers with opportunities to fulfill the goals of Florida Statute 233.061, which requires instruction that encourages patriotism and acknowledgement of the sacrifice of military veterans.

Veterans speak in the classrooms about their experiences in the military service.

For more information on the program or the informational meeting call Don Courtney, program coordinator, at 745-9564.

Korean War remembrance

Last Sunday, veterans of the Korean War commemorated the 56th anniversary of the start of the conflict.

The four years of battle is called the "Forgotten War" because so many Americans know little about the time American military men and woman, along with our allies, fought against the North Koreans and Chinese.

According to the Department of Defense Web site, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Army, north of the 38th Parallel, began firing artillery and mortars at about 4 a.m. June 25, 1950, on Republic of Korea Army positions in the south.

The 38th Parallel was established as the dividing line between North Korea and South Korea at the end of World War II.

According to Department of Defense figures, more than 5.7 million Americans served in the Korean War between 1950-1953, with about 36,500 dying.

There were more than 103,000 Americans wounded and 7,245 were captured, some of them held for years in brutal conditions in North Korean POW camps.

Thousands of Americans continue to serve in South Korea under stressful conditions, keeping the armistice signed July 27, 1953.

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Manatee Answers the Call, a column about those serving in and veterans of the U.S. Armed Services, appears every Thursday in The Herald. You can contact Carl Mario Nudi at 745-7027 or via e-mail at cnudi@heraldtoday.com.

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