

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



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Nonprofit offers assistance to families of military personnel in need

Story by Kevin Joy
Columbus Dispatch

COLUMBUS — Chris Callen likens the routine of his namesake Westerville nonprofit to that of fire-fighting: You never know when a distress call will come in.

Circumstances aren't life-threatening, but they might threaten the well-being of an individual or a family.

A car breaks down unexpectedly. An overdue rent check could lead to eviction. An empty refrigerator offers nothing for hungry children.

The Callen Foundation strives to put struggling soldiers at ease — if even just momentarily.



Chris Callen, founder of the Callen Foundation charity, at a monument to Veterans in Westerville. (Eric Albrecht, Columbus Dispatch)

“Everybody gets into a situation,” said Callen, a Vietnam War Veteran who in 2011 established a charity to help families of active military personnel with one-time gifts meant to address urgent needs.

No monetary repayment, the 62-year-old said, is required: “Just pass it along when you can help somebody else.”

Requests for help typically originate through one of six family-assistance centers managed by the Ohio National Guard — which, to thwart scammers, review and validate an applicant's identity and situation.

Such centers serve members in all branches of the military.

Unlike some other groups offering aid, the Callen Foundation doesn't require that recipients be veterans or have experience overseas.

“It's a great entity,” said Capt. Douglas Franz, who, in his Columbus post with the guard, has screened and directed queries to the Callen Foundation — where each case is then presented before the board of trustees.

The average gift totals \$430; the maximum award is \$1,500.

The foundation fills one or two requests a week, Callen said.

If circumstances compel it, he delivers a last-minute house payment or calls a utility company personally.

The need is there: A 2013 survey conducted by USAA (which provides financial services to members of the U.S. military) and Blue

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Remembering June 6, 1944 - 70th Anniversary of D-Day



Summer Safety 2014

Summer is finally here, and with it comes hazards unique to this cherished time of year. As the weather warms and Soldiers, Airmen and Family members take to roads and waterways for some well-deserved down time, they will be exposed to risk more often than they might think. Know your surroundings and take the precautionary steps to be safe and enjoy your time with Family.



Nonprofit offers assistance...

(Cont. from pg. 1)

Star Families found that 65 percent of military households were experiencing “financial stress” — exacerbated in part by the occupation’s often- chaotic schedule.

And, although domestic financial hardship is a universal issue, Callen is particularly sensitive to shortfalls of servicemen and -women who sacrifice for others.

“Freedom isn’t free,” said Callen, who these days plays the bugle at area military funerals and tributes. “They’re good people, . . . overworked and underpaid for what they do.”

The son of an Army captain from Mansfield, Callen volunteered for the draft at age 18 and was sent to Vietnam.

As a civilian, he and wife Lynn raised two children but were never stretched to make ends meet.

His insurance agency of 32 years has been fruitful, prompting Callen to fund about one-third of the charitable endeavor using his own wallet. Public and private donations compose the rest. He’d like to get more corporate donors on board.

Foundation trustee Jerry Jodfrey, a retired Army master sergeant and founder of the Ohio Fallen Heroes Memorial Park in Sunbury, championed Callen’s cause.

“It’s just what drives him,” said Jodfrey, 68. “He understands the military way of life.

“We take care of our own.”

Transactions often play out anonymously. Callen might not speak with a beneficiary or even get a phone number. Still, he has received — and kept — notes reflecting gratitude.

“I will never forget your kindness,” wrote a recipient who, after a military paycheck was delayed, couldn’t pay a month’s rent.

“You’ve helped me way more than you know,” shared another, who was eased out of utility-bill debt.

In a more atypical case, the foundation anonymously sent supermarket gift cards on a recurring basis to a woman whose spouse was killed in action.

Recently remarried, she wrote Callen to say the gesture was no longer necessary — and to thank him.

“It always seemed to arrive when I least expected it but needed it the most. You have touched our lives.”

DID YOU KNOW?

June is National Safety Month. The 2014 National Safety Month theme, "Safety: It takes all of us," was inspired by the idea of continuous risk reduction – a key pillar in the Journey to Safety Excellence. A successful safety program depends on spotting hazards early, evaluating their risk and removing or controlling them before harm is done. Use this June to find creative ways to engage everyone in reducing risk in your workplaces. A little effort today has the potential to prevent tragedy tomorrow.

JUNE 7

Change of Command for the Fort Ohio Training Installations Command, Camp Perry Joint Training Site, bldg 950, Lawrence Road, Port Clinton, 1100 hrs.
Outgoing Commander:
Col. Dean Brown
Incoming Commander:
Lt. Col. Barb Herrington Clemens

237th Brigade Support Battalion 2014 Battalion Ball, Embassy Suites, 3775 Park East Drive, Beachwood, 1700 - 2400 hrs.
RSVP by May 17th to Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Walker at 614-336-6020.

JUNE 8

B Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Valor and Service Awards Ceremony, Naval Reserve Center, Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, Columbus, 1200 - 1400 hrs.
Contact Staff Sgt. Clemente at 614-336-6717 for more information.

JUNE 21

Attention past/present members of the 112th, 383rd, 385th, 684th and 145th. The 112th MED BDE Assoc. will host a Cookout & Camping Reunion at The Pastime Park, Plain City, at 1300hrs. Meat, ice tea, lemonade will be provided. Camping available. RSVP: John Good @ jgood@reagan.com or Chris Bell at 614-316-2501.

JUNE 28

371st Sustainment Brigade Ball, Courtyard by Marriott, 100 S. Fountain Avenue, Springfield, 1800 hrs. RSVP by May 31 to Chief Warrant Officer Binckley at 937-322-3600.

SGLI premium adjustment effective July

WASHINGTON – The Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program will adjust its monthly premium rate from 6.5 cents per \$1,000 back to the 2006 rate of seven cents per \$1,000 of insurance, a modest increase to ensure the SGLI program remains in a strong financial position.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to place the interests of Servicemembers first and foremost by keeping SGLI premiums as low as possible while also maintaining the necessary reserve levels to ensure funds are available to pay claims to Servicemembers' beneficiaries. Since the start of the SGLI Program in 1965, monthly premiums have decreased from 20 cents per \$1,000 to the current 6.5 cents per \$1,000. There have been periodic increases and decreases, but over the past 30 years premiums have fluctuated only 2.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance.

In July 2008, VA lowered the monthly premium rate for basic SGLI from seven cents per \$1,000 of insurance to 6.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance to reduce excess reserve funds in the program. Insurance companies hold reserve funds to ensure they can pay future claims. It is common practice in the group insurance industry to adjust premium rates as reserve funds increase and decrease, which typically happens when there are changes in the economy and/or changes in the number of death claims.

In order for the program to remain in good financial condition, it is now necessary to increase the premium rate by half a cent per \$1,000 of insurance. Since 2008, as a result of the half-cent reduction and decreases in interest rates, reserve funds have decreased.

VA also uses actuaries, individuals who deal with financial impact of risk, to conduct program experience studies when evaluating and adjusting reserve assumptions; and each year, an independent auditor verifies the accuracy of their reserve calculations.

For a Servicemember with the maximum \$400,000 of life insurance, this change will mean an increase of \$2 a month.

The new premium rate will take effect on July 1, 2014. Individual Ready Reserve members who are drilling for points toward retirement or who do not receive pay for other reasons will be billed by their branch of service for the higher premium beginning in July 2014. For information on the new rates, visit <http://benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp>.

Source: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2538>

The Vet Center Combat Call Center is a Dept. of Veterans Affairs program for those who have deployed to a combat area.

1-877-WAR-VETS (1-877-924-8387) is an around the clock confidential call center where combat Vet-

erans and their Families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life.

The staff is comprised of combat Veterans from several eras as well as Family members of combat Veterans.



2014 Regional Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee Meetings:

Region 1 - 24 July

Region 2 - 16 July

Region 3 - 29 July

Region 4 - 22 July

Region 5 - 15 July

Region 6 - 9 July

For questions regarding the time or place of RISFAC meetings, contact Staff Sgt. Ikiia Perry at (614) 336-4135.

Retirement Packets

Retirement packets are mailed to your last known mailing address. If you change addresses before your 59th birthday, make sure you contact the office below so they will know where to send your packet.

You will need to send the packet back to receive your retirement pay. Make sure to include the following: NGB Form 22, DD Form 214(s), NGB Form 23, 20-year letter and SBP election. If you are missing any documents, contact Ms. Jeanette Coughenour at 614-336-7038 (ONG HQs).

**U.S. Army Human Resources
Center of Excellence - Fort Knox
ATTN: AHRC-PDR-RCR
1600 Spearhead Division Ave.
Dept. 420
Fort Knox, KY 40122-56402
1-800-318-5298 or 502-613-8950**

If you are an Army Guard/Reserve or an Air Force Guard/Reserve retiree, and need help completing your retirement pay packet, contact Sgt. 1st Class Richard Wright at 614-336-7277.

State legislators attend Ohio National Guard tour



Maj. Gen. Deborah A. Ashenhurst (second from left), Ohio adjutant general, hosts members of the Ohio Legislature and staff for an Ohio National Guard legislative familiarization tour May 8, 2014, at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base in Columbus, Ohio. The tour, which better acquainted participants with the missions and members of the Ohio National Guard, included an orientation flight on a KC-135 Stratotanker (background) during an aerial refueling mission. (Bill Pierce, ONG)