



# FROM THE HOMEFRONT



JANUARY  
2025

## In This Issue

2. Vermont Veterans Outreach / State Soldier & Family Readiness Group
3. Survivor Outreach Services / Personal Financial Counselor
4. Military OneSource
5. Behavioral Health Services
6. Vermont Air National Guard
7. Chaplain's Reflection
8. JAG / PRIME Program
9. Child & Youth Program
10. Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve / Contacts



24/7 VT Military & Family  
Support Center  
(888) 607-8773

## All New!



Do you want to be the first to know about upcoming events and opportunities? join the "In The Know" email list!

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPEventDistro](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPEventDistro)



## TUNE IN!

New episode on the first  
Wednesday of the month.  
7PM on the Kitchen  
Spoons & Combat Boots  
Facebook Page

[www.facebook.com/kitchenspoonsandcombatboots](http://www.facebook.com/kitchenspoonsandcombatboots)

## MILITARY & FAMILY READINESS



### Welcome to the New Year!

The New Year is a great time to re-evaluate your financial readiness. Now, more than ever, is the time for a solid financial foundation and plan. Especially if your service member is deploying at some point in the future. Going into a deployment with a realistic budget and expectations will hopefully help alleviate some of the stress of financial burden.

Even if you don't have any deployments on the horizon, the holiday expenses are arriving, and tax season is here. These are both things that can cause significant amounts of stress if you are not properly prepared financially. If you would like assistance creating a basic budget and some tips and techniques, please contact

someone from the Military and Readiness Team. We can get you started and refer you to financial professionals.

If you are interested in volunteering whether it be at an individual event or working directly with a specific unit, please reach out to the unit, a MFRS team member, or the State Soldier and Family Readiness Group Leader, Jessica Smith at [jessica.m.smith308.mil@army.mil](mailto:jessica.m.smith308.mil@army.mil).

In closing, we on the MFRS team hope that you and your families can enjoy all Vermont has to offer in the winter season. Stay tuned to our Family Programs Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/VTNGFamilyPrograms/](http://www.facebook.com/VTNGFamilyPrograms/) to see all the great upcoming events!



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## VERMONT VETERANS OUTREACH



Susan Triplett is the newest member of the Vermont Veterans Outreach team, now serving as the VA Liaison located at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in White River Junction. As a veteran herself, she understands the challenges individuals face when seeking assistance and navigating available resources. Throughout her journey, she has maintained a passion for helping fellow veterans, which has included volunteering for Friends of Veterans and at a weekly farmers market organized by the vet center. Currently, Susan serves as a board member for Friends of Veterans. She has previously worked with veterans by coordinating a vet-to-vet program that paired veterans with one another for companionship and support, reminiscent of the buddy system during basic training. This initiative was recognized in the Valley News as one of the top five stories of the year. Looking ahead, Susan is eager to continue her journey in supporting other veterans through this new opportunity. When she isn't working, she enjoys spending time with her sons and riding rollercoasters.



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## STATE SOLDIER & FAMILY READINESS GROUP



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I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and are staying cozy this winter! As the holidays come to a close and the days grow darker and longer, it can be a challenging time for many. Remember to keep the contact numbers for your unit's Military & Family Readiness Specialist (MFRS) or Soldier & Family Readiness Group (SFRG) handy—they're here to connect you with resources that can help lighten your load.

One effective way to combat those winter blues is to get involved in your community! The State SFRG is always looking for volunteers to assist with upcoming events. If you know of an initiative that could benefit other military families, don't hesitate to reach out to your unit's MFRS or SFRG to share the details.

Building those community connections is crucial, especially with potential missions on the horizon. There are numerous community partners eager to support our service members and their families; they just need a little guidance to get started. If you know someone in your community who wants to offer assistance, connect them with the SFRG, and the rest will fall into place.

Here's to hoping for some mild winter months ahead. Stay safe, happy, and healthy!

## SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES



Survivor Outreach Services is excited to invite Survivors and their families to share their creative ideas for future Survivor events. With a new Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator, ideas from past events that went well or ideas that have not yet been done are very much welcomed and encouraged to be shared. Whether it's a hike, attending one of the many Vermont festivals, or as simple as getting together for a cup of coffee, Survivors and their families are invited to share their ideas with the SOS Coordinator via email or Facebook.



Stay connected with Vermont Survivor Outreach Services on Facebook

**[www.facebook.com/Vermont.SOS/](https://www.facebook.com/Vermont.SOS/)**



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### Alright, let's tackle that holiday debt hangover!

Here's your quick guide to paying off those bills ASAP!

- Get organized: List all your debts with their balances, monthly payments, and interest rates. If you don't have a budget, make one now. Be honest about where you can cut back to pay more than the minimum.
- Choose your strategy: You've got two main options:
  - Debt snowball: Pay off the smallest balance first, then move to the next. Great for quick wins and motivation.
  - Debt avalanche: Target the highest interest rate first. It potentially saves more money overall.
- Boost your payoff power: Consider a temporary side gig. Yeah, it might eat into your free time but remember – it's not forever. That extra cash can speed things up.

**Pick the method that'll keep you on track.  
You know yourself best!**

**Remember, consistency is key. Stick to your plan,  
use tools like PowerPay, and keep your eyes on the  
prize: a debt-free future. You've got this!**

Check out **[www.powerpay.org](http://www.powerpay.org)**. This free website is a powerful tool for your debt-free journey.

- Enter your debt info to see how fast you can pay it off
- Compare snowball vs. avalanche methods
- Print a debt repayment schedule for your fridge
- Track how much of each payment goes to balance vs. interest





## fun & FITNESS

Staying healthy and fit can be fun. It's also a wonderful way to bond with your family and community. Military OneSource offers resources that can help you begin or sustain your path to a healthier you. And you might have some fun along the way.

### Work out with a partner or a group

Exercising with a partner or team helps you:

- Maintain consistency in your workouts
- Stay motivated to show up for that early morning session
- Connect with your community

### Get fit with your family

There is no better time to bond with your family than on a walk, on a bike trail or in the pool. Even dancing together in your living room or doing active chores around the house, such as raking leaves or moving boxes, are physical activities you can enjoy together.

**MILITARY**  
**ONESOURCE**



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#### Health and Wellness Coaching Consultation

Military OneSource health and wellness coaches can help you stay on track with your wellness goals, tackle stress and deal with life transitions.



#### Military OneSource Health and Wellness Coach

Connect with a coach to clarify your focus, keep you on course, celebrate your achievements and prepare you for the unexpected.

### Stay motivated with a health and wellness coach

Everyone could use a cheerleader to inspire fitness goals. A coach can help you lose weight, get in better shape, manage stress, tackle transitions, and more.

### Reduce your risk of injury and overtraining

Understanding the risks that go with extreme conditioning programs can help you reap the benefits of peak fitness while avoiding injury from overtraining. Make sure your goal to better your health doesn't end up doing more harm than good.

### Use tools to manage stress and improve wellness

Military OneSource provides a variety of wellness apps to help you stay strong and resilient in mind and body. Take advantage of available resources to improve your resilience and keep you and your family moving, motivated, and on the road to better health.

For more information and/or support reach out to Military OneSource at (800) 342-9647 (24/7) or visit [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil).





## Create Your Personalized Change Plan by setting Goals



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It's important to set goals because they provide direction, motivation, and measurable steps to achieve desired changes. You may want to do this to improve a specific area of your life, like health or career, by creating a clear roadmap to follow. To begin:

### **Come up with 3 to 5 important, realistic, and achievable Change Plan Goals**

- What do you hope to achieve?
- What new skill would you like to learn?
- Are there any problematic behaviors (one's actions) and/or attitudinal (one's feelings) changes you would like to make?
- Do you have any health and physical wellbeing concerns?
- Would you like to make financial wellness adjustments?
- How can you improve your relationships?
- How well do you communicate?

Note: Think in terms of each goal having its own set of little goals or baby steps as opposed to the goal in its entirety. For example: start with a topic, think of a title, formulate some bullet points, contemplate some ideas for the introduction, move toward the main body and then put it all together for the conclusion.

### **And then, answer the following Change Plan questions**

- I will make the following changes in my life...
- I want to make these changes because...
- I will take the following steps to make these changes happen by thinking of the who, what, when, where, why, and how...
- My support people are...
- My support people can help me in the following ways...
- I will know my CHANGE PLAN is working when...
- I feel some possible setbacks/triggers could be...
- I will continue to move forward in the following way(s) if setbacks/triggers occur...



**TAKE  
ACTION**

**CONGRATULATIONS, YOU HAVE MADE  
CHANGE PLAN PROGRESS!**



## FAREWELL MR. NICHOLAS THOMAS

About one and a half years ago, Mr. Nicholas Thomas took on the role of the 158th Fighter Wing's Airman and Family Readiness Manager. The role had been vacant for some time, and he essentially needed to start fresh in rebuilding and bringing programs back into compliance. He accomplished this and much more during his time with the 158th Fighter Wing, having welcomed his first child into the world, hiring a full-time Airman and Family Readiness Specialist and rounding out his time by completing his Doctorate this month, presenting his Dissertation to the Wing his last week serving here. He hasn't left the Family Readiness world however, remaining in the same role and transferring to the National Guard base in South Carolina where he is closer to his wife's family and more opportunities to grow and thrive. We'd like to send out a THANK YOU and BEST WISHES to Mr. Thomas and his family as they embark on this new adventure!



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**COMING SOON**

*Tasha Ludovici is joining the team as our new Airman & Family Readiness Manager. Look for her introductory bio and get to know her in the next newsletter!*

## DON'T LET CHILDCARE NEEDS COMPLICATE YOUR ALREADY BUSY LIFE

Navigate to  
<https://upwards.com/benefits/military>  
or scan the QR code to explore this incredible program available to you and your family.



### Need childcare? We've got you.

Upwards covers childcare for the Army National Guard!

Eligible military members receive covered childcare from caregivers during drill weekends!

- 1 Sign up**  
Use the QR code to get started.
- 2 Tell us about your needs**  
Meet your Childcare Navigator and answer a few short questions about your family and childcare needs.
- 3 Match with caregivers**  
We'll help you find a provider your children will love while you focus on serving our country!\*

\*Provider matching based on your family's home record or unit location.



Begin your childcare journey with Upwards!

**(816) 670-3286**  
[heroes@upwards.com](mailto:heroes@upwards.com)  
<https://upwards.com/benefits/military>

## CHAPLAIN'S REFLECTION



**"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1.2)**

Have you recovered yet? You've just gone through Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Yule, or a number of other events at the end of 2024, including the Army-Navy Game (Go Army, Beat Navy). You may be tired and worn out, so I wanted to remind you to take care of yourself.

It's customary every New Year to wish prosperity and good health to friends and strangers alike. The new year is a good time for fresh starts, especially when it comes to one's health. Try practicing habits such as exercising more, getting enough sleep, or eating one less farmstand doughnut. Saint John desires his readers to have good health, but he also includes focusing on one's soul. Like your body, take time to nourish your soul, (your mind, will, and emotions according to some psychologists and theologians). Begin a spiritual practice such as meditation, prayer, or attending corporate worship with other like-minded individuals.

Perhaps reading religious literature while drinking coffee is more your style (I know that's mine). Whatever you decide to do, at whatever level you do it in, start now. The habits and practices you begin today will pay dividends by the end of the year. You may still be tired at the end of 2025, but your body and soul will be healthier because of the work you put in now.



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**Are you ready to take the first step toward a stronger, fitter, and more prepared Army? Let this handbook guide you as we strive to elevate our collective performance.**

Download the Holistic Health & Fitness Handbook

[www.army.mil/article/267256/holistic\\_health\\_and\\_fitness\\_soldier\\_readiness\\_system](http://www.army.mil/article/267256/holistic_health_and_fitness_soldier_readiness_system)





If a parent and spouse were to both pass away, what would happen to the children? For service members who are also parents, this is one of the most important questions that can be answered in a last will and testament.

If there is no surviving competent parent, a probate court must decide which individual would be in the best interest of the child to name as guardian. The probate court does this under the rules established by the state legislature in the probate code. Vermont's probate code allows a parent to nominate a guardian in his or her last will and testament.

Parents often have a strong opinion on which aunt, uncle, grandparent, or friend would be a good guardian, and which would not. These preferences may go to the grave with the parent unless he or she makes a record in writing by nominating a guardian in his or her last will and testament. The nomination of a guardian for minor children is a very important component of a will.

This article is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. The SJA's Office at Camp Johnson in Colchester offers free legal assistance for service members, pension-receiving military retirees, and their spouses. Drafting and execution of last wills and testaments is one of the legal assistance services available. Appointments may be made by calling (802) 249-2178.



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## PRIME PROGRAM

Partnered Recruiting Initiative for Military and Employers

### WHAT IS PRIME?

The Vermont National Guard is partnering with businesses across the state and region to provide outstanding full time employment opportunities to current guard members and recruits. "Keep the best Vermonters in Vermont!"

### WHY PRIME?

- Obtain adequate full-time employment
- Improve your full-time employment situation: Better pay, more responsibility, and better skills
- Work for a company that appreciates your guard service

### AVAILABLE POSITIONS

- Manufacturing
- Trucking/Logistics
- Medicine
- Information Technology
- Service
- Construction
- Government Agencies

### SOME OF OUR PARTNERS

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your unit recruiter, career counselor or the VTNG Strategic Planner at 802-338-3837

Scan QR Code to view PRIME WEBSITE

## Keep the best Vermonters in Vermont!

The Partnered Recruiting Initiative for Military and Employers program combines the recruiting efforts of the National Guard and civilian employers to recruit and retain the best and brightest Vermonters for employment and military service.

## Who's Involved?

The VTNG is partnering with businesses across the state and region to assist Guard members to find adequate or better full-time employment. The VTNG will help you connect with our partner businesses and find your next role in a company/industry that is a great fit.

## VTNG PRIME PROGRAM

PARTNERED RECRUITING INITIATIVE FOR MILITARY AND EMPLOYERS

# CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM



## What we do...

Our Child & Youth Program is dedicated to offering resources, training, and leadership opportunities specifically for military youth. We aim to establish local, community-based support networks that address the social, emotional, and academic needs of those affected by a family member's military service.

## What we provide...

Events: Day & Overnight Camps, Community/Partner Outings, State Teen Panel, Service Learning, Military Appreciation, Virtual Subscription Packet, Month of the Military Child.

Resources: Deployment, Education, Grief, Wellness, Parenting, Resiliency, Military Awareness, Online Support Groups

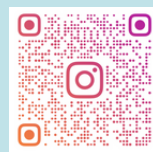
Outreach/Partnerships: Educators, Counselors, Volunteer Organizations, Yellow Ribbons, Partner Organization Engagement

## Our Approach

Our efforts revolve around fostering connections, resilience, and essential life skills in military-connected youth. The program also integrates an evidence-based curriculum to empower military youth as they navigate their transition into adulthood.



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## ATTENTION!

**Are you interested in joining our Teen Council?**

The Vermont National Guard Teen Council is dedicated to fostering leadership, readiness, resilience, and networking skills. This empowers council members to shape policies that impact military teens and work collaboratively towards achieving the council's objectives.

~~~~~  
**Contact your**  
**local CYP team**  
**for more details.**

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# EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD & RESERVE



**We extend our gratitude to all service members who took the opportunity to nominate their employers for the esteemed Freedom Award during the nomination period. If you missed the deadline for this distinguished honor, you have the option to submit a nomination for a Patriot Award.**

What exactly is a Patriot Award? Patriot Awards are bestowed upon individual supervisors rather than the entire staff or organization. You are welcome to nominate multiple supervisors, and each awardee will receive a Patriot Award certificate and a corresponding lapel pin. You may request that the Patriot Award be sent to either your home address or to the ESGR State Committee in your supervisor's state, which can assist in coordinating the award presentation to your supervisor.

Furthermore, the spouse of a Reservist or Guardsman is also eligible to nominate their supervisor for the Patriot Award. While not mandated by law, many employers voluntarily support Guard and Reserve spouses, who often encounter the challenges associated with military service. Balancing childcare, household management, and work schedules often becomes necessary when one spouse leaves to serve our country.

If you have any questions, or require assistance, please reach out to the Vermont Volunteer Support Technician at (802) 338-4187 789 Vermont National Guard Road (Building 10-14) Camp Johnson Colchester, VT.



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