Legal Issues Affecting Military Personnel, Veterans, Retirees and Their Families

Lawyers helping service members have a great new tool in their arsenal!

After two years of hard work, the Pennsylvania Bar Association Military and Veterans’ Affairs Committee is pleased to announce publication of its lawyers’ desk reference, titled Legal Issues Affecting Military Personnel, Veterans, Retirees and Their Families. The publication is a joint project of the PBA Military and Veterans’ Affairs Committee, the Military Affairs Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Bar Institute. PBI’s Harry Owens and Andrea Mumma coordinated the project with a wide range of volunteer support, especially from PBA committee Vice Chair Laurel Hettinger Fedak. PBA committee Co-Chair Andrew Eisemann thanked all of the contributors “for their efforts and continued support and dedication to the military and retiree community.”

The manual, available from PBI in three-ring binder format and CD-ROM for $25 plus shipping and handling, is designed to assist both the lawyer familiar with how a servicemember’s status can affect civil and criminal matters and the lawyer who is unfamiliar with these issues. Not intended to be an all-inclusive resource, the manual serves as an overview of issues such as the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), veterans’ rights and benefits, family law issues, disability issues and miscellaneous matters affecting military personnel and their families, including traffic law and consumer law issues. In addition, the manual offers a comprehensive resource section containing Web site addresses and points of contact relating to active duty/reserve, retiree, substance abuse and mental health, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and veterans’ organizations, educational and employment benefits, and a summary of VA benefits for National Guard and Reserve personnel.

PBI has scheduled a three-hour continuing legal education course on the new manual for Tuesday morning, Aug. 5, 2008, in Philadelphia, with Web cast across the state. The CLE will guide participants through many of the substantive areas covered by the manual.

Unveiled for committee members at the November 2007 Committee/Section Day, buzz is being generated across the commonwealth by a series of one-hour sessions leading up to the August CLE. Members of the Allegheny County Military and Veterans Affairs Committee journeyed to Washington County for a one-hour introduction to the desktop reference on Jan. 25, 2008, for the local bench/bar program. Similar sessions are planned by the PBA’s Pro Bono Office for Lancaster on Feb. 26 and Monroe County on March 25.

The PBA Military and Veterans’ Affairs Committee welcomes all attorneys throughout Pennsylvania who are willing to assist service members with legal problems to join the Committee and the Legal Assistance to Military Personnel (LAMP) program by contacting committee staffer David Trevaskis at david.trevaskis@pabar.org or 1-800-932-0311, Ext. 2236.

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