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## **Reporter's Notebook:**

### **Web sites that serve soldiers, veterans**

By Gestin Suttle  
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Soldiers past and present have new tools to help them map out their career battle plans.

They are ArmyHQ.com and Vet.com.

ArmyHQ is operated by CentralHQ.com, based in Seattle. The company also plans to launch sites for the other branches of the military.

They are nifty sites. And they cohabitate in a new, unusual way.

On the ArmyHQ.com Web site, users can link directly to Vet.com, a site teeming with information about jobs for former military personnel.

ArmyHQ has formed a strategic alliance with the Atlanta-based Vet to allow visitors of its own site full access to all the information VetJobs has to offer, such as job postings and how to find a headhunter.

But finding that jobs link on ArmyHQ is a little tough. From ArmyHQ's home page, click on the "life" button at the top. From there, click on "transition" at the left of the screen. That will lead directly to the jobs page.

You can also get directly to VetJobs by typing [www.vetjobs.com](http://www.vetjobs.com). The site has a link back to ArmyHQ off of its home page.

The two dot.coms decided to hook up because each saw the other's work as complementary, said Ted Daywalt, CEO of VetJobs.com.

"We like their (ArmyHQ's) approach, the fact that they are not trying to hustle or sell things to veterans," he said.

The two sites are more than just aligned. "It's what we call a co-branding agreement," Daywalt said.

VetJobs' data is "actually embedded in the middle of (ArmyHQ's) page" - as opposed to a link that would take users from ArmyHQ to VetJobs.

That provides quicker access for users, Daywalt said, because they won't have to leave ArmyHQ's site to get to the information on VetJobs.com's site.

"This is a unique technology," Daywalt said. "It permits both of us to count the hit; it gives much better, faster and functional service for people who visit ArmyHQ."

CentralHQ.com is a wholly owned subsidiary of Advanced Interactive Systems, a privately held venture-backed company based in Seattle.

VetJobs receives funding from the Veterans of Foreign War. It is a privately held company with plans to go public within the next year or two, Daywalt said.

The ArmyHQ site has information relating to both military life and subjects of general interest. For instance, the site contains details on base locations, news about military actions, vacations and recreation, and consumer and health information.

Some of what the site provides seems routine but can be quite valuable to someone in the military.

For instance, there's a section that helps users figure out how to properly wear their medals. Soldiers can click on the medals they have and a picture will be displayed showing what order the medals should be worn in.

It's a big help because "You can get in a lot of trouble" if your medals are in the wrong order, said Joanna Alexander, president of CentralHQ.com.

Soldiers can also get training and field manuals through the site.

While such offerings may seem mundane, Alexander said, "Sometimes ... the most mundane can be the most appreciated."

ArmyHQ also offers free e-mail., and coupons for discounts at local businesses, which users can get by typing in their ZIP codes.

And by the end of summer, ArmyHQ hopes to launch a new section that helps soldiers figure out their career path within the military - something that a lot of soldiers never really think about, Alexander said.

"When you go into the military ... you tend to get put where there's a need," she said. Many young military recruits don't realize they can set their own direction and set themselves up for life outside of the military.

The site will help the soldier home in on a career path, either broadly or specifically, Alexander said.

The site will use information the soldier puts into the site, such as what interests or training he has, then create a flow chart for the person.

"It draws a path," Alexander said. It will spell out which classes the soldier would need to take and could even provide applications. It will offer links to bulletin boards of other military personnel who have posted advice about the process.

"I think this could be a great retention tool for the military," Alexander said.

In fact, she and Daywalt stress that they are not trying to persuade talented people to march out of the armed services.

"We encourage people to try to stay in," Alexander said.

But a certain number will leave anyway, so both groups - former and current military personnel - should have as much assistance as possible, Alexander said.

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