



# Veterans As Mentors (VAMs) Forum Resource Guide

September 12, 2012



# Department of Veterans Affairs

## For Official Use Only

This guide is for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) personnel who use the Veterans As Mentors (VAMs) Forum to post questions, replies or comments in topics on the board. This guide describes the features and provides step-by-step instructions on using the forum.

### Notational Conventions

The following notational conventions are used throughout this guide.

Convention	Meaning
ALL CAPITALS	Acronyms
<b>Bold</b>	Key names on the keyboard Buttons or hyperlinks on a page
	Note or tip

### Technical Support

If you need assistance, please contact the *VA for Vets* help desk at 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387).

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## Getting Started

The VAMs Forum is an online discussion site that contains categories of forums, topics and individual posts. This communication platform allows you to post questions, responses to other people's questions and comments.

The VAMs Forum benefits include:

- Rich communication platform – With a single click, you can post a question, reply to a question or request immediately, or think about your answer and reply later.
- Flexibility – You can read, respond to or comment on any forum at any time that is convenient to you.
- Automatic email notifications – When someone posts to a forum or topic you have selected to watch, you will receive periodic email updates on recent activity within that forum or topic.
- Archive messaging – You can view all the posts in a topic.

The VAMs Forum has a disclaimer that states the terms under which VA Veterans can access and use the information. It also explains the user's obligations and the board's sponsor—Veteran Employment Services Office.



You'll need a *VA for Vets* account to access the VAMs Forum.

## Registering for a VA for Vets Account

1. In the Address bar of your web browser, enter <http://VAforVets.VA.gov>. This takes you to the VA for Vets home page.
2. Select **Register**. This takes you to the Register page.

The screenshot shows the VA for Vets website home page. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the text "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS" and the VA seal. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Veteran Services, Business, About VA, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. A prominent yellow "Register" button is on the right side. The main content area features the "VA for Vets" logo with the tagline "YOUR GATEWAY TO VA CAREERS". A central banner includes a photo of Secretary Eric K. Shinseki and the text: "Your Gateway to VA Careers" and "Veterans are proven performers. They distinguish themselves in uniform and they distinguish themselves as employees. They will help all of us achieve our missions." Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. Below this is a "Career Center" section with a "Go to the Career Center" button. On the right, there is a "WHAT'S NEW" section listing "Military.com Career Expo Recruiting Event" with dates and locations. At the bottom, there are three colored buttons: "Veterans Come Work for VA", "VA Service Members Find Deployment and Reintegration Support", and "VA Veteran Employees Make a Difference Every Day".

**Register**

### Web Privacy Policy

The VA for Vets Recruitment, Reintegration, and Retention Program records and/or stores the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email of the VA employees, Veterans (Vets), or other administrative personnel assisting in the program. The information is authorized by the end user and/or veteran for release to the VA or to its corporate partners for the purpose of employment placement recruitment and other services offered by this program. The VA for Vets Recruitment, Reintegration, and Retention Program does not store or transmit personal health information. As a Service Member or Veteran, you have the option to waive and/or refuse the service and the retention of your information. The VA for Vets Recruitment, Reintegration, and Retention Program is a U.S. Government information system that utilizes COTS products and services provided by Commercial Entities in a seamless IT Infrastructure that has been granted an Authority To Operate (ATO) by the VA for Vets Designated Approving Authority (DAA). The login, authentication, and system usage may be monitored and recorded, and may also be subject to electronic audit. Unauthorized use of the system is prohibited and is subject to criminal and civil penalties. Usage of the VA for Vets Recruitment, Reintegration, and Retention Program indicates consent to monitoring and recording.

The information solicited is necessary to accomplish the action requested by the requester. Furnishing the information is voluntary; however, if the information is not furnished, we will be unable to take further action on your request. The principal purpose(s) for which the information will be used is marketing of individual resumes to public and private employers. By voluntarily providing VA for Vets information, you are consenting to VA's use and disclosure of that information in the manner described in this Privacy and Legal Notice, the Department of Veterans Affairs Directive 6515, the VA Handbook 6500, and the Privacy Act.

### Register with Your Email

Use the form below to create a new account. If you already have a user name and password for MyCareeratVA.VA.gov you do not need to create a new one. You may log in now. Passwords must be at least 7 characters in length and contain at least one upper case, lower case, numeric and special character.

For support registering or accessing your account, please contact 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387) and select the Technical Assistance option.

Fields marked with an asterisk are required.

**Email:\***

**Password:\***

**Confirm password:\***

succeed

reinte

Type the two words:

reCAPTCHA™  
stop spam.  
read books.

**Create** **Cancel** Or sign up with DSLogon

3. In the Email field, enter <your email>.

4. In the Password field, enter <your password>.



Passwords must be a minimum of seven characters in length and contain at least one upper case letter, one numeral, and one special character.

5. In the Confirm password field, enter <your password>.

6. In the Type the two words field, enter the two words that are above the field.

7. Select **Create**. This takes you to the Profile page.



Selecting **Cancel** takes you back to the VA for Vets home page.

Profile

### Edit your Profile

Fields marked with an asterisk are required.

Email on file: test@va.gov

First name: \*

Last name: \*

VA Employee?

VA Email: test@va.gov

Day of Birth:

I would like to receive e-mail updates about upcoming events and announcements from VA for Vets.

Save Cancel

8. In the First name field, enter <your first name>.
9. In the Last name field, enter <your last name>.
10. In the VA employee? checkbox:, check the box if you are a VA employee. If you are not a VA employee, then go to step 13.
11. In the VA Email field, enter <your VA email address>.
12. Select your Day of Birth from the drop-down lists.
13. Select **Save**. A confirmation message appears that your *VA for Vets* account was successfully created.

Profile

### Your profile was successfully created.

Click a link below to log in and use the VA for Vets features.

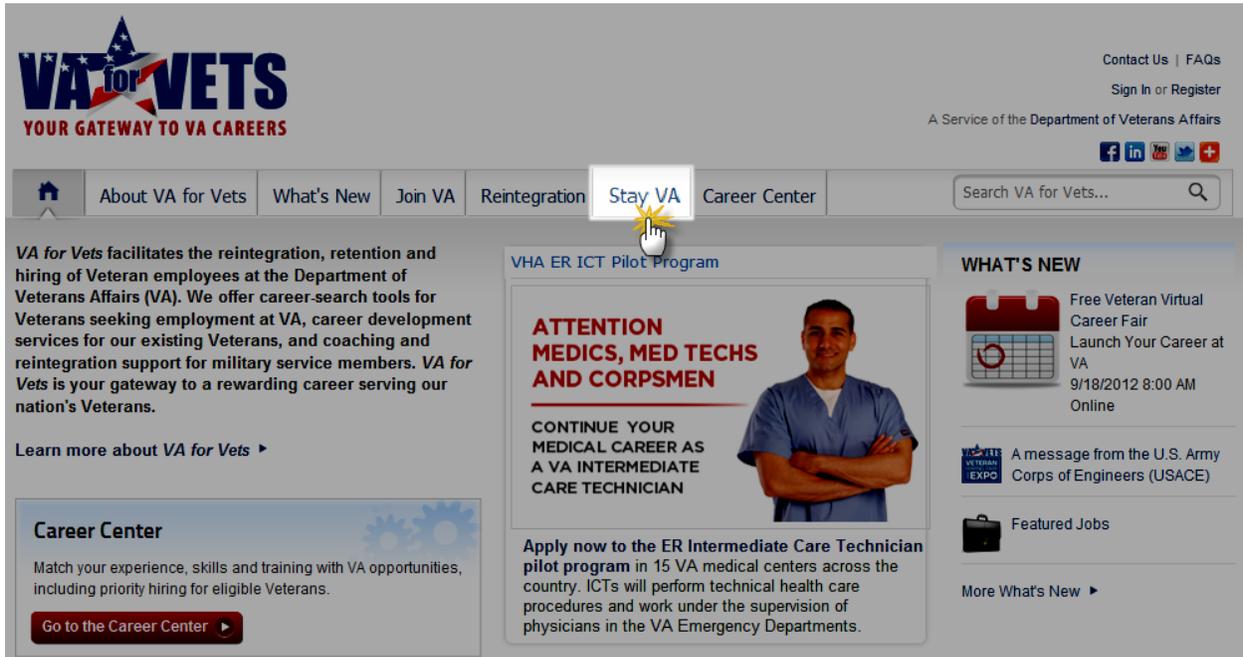
View Your Dashboard

Update Your Profile

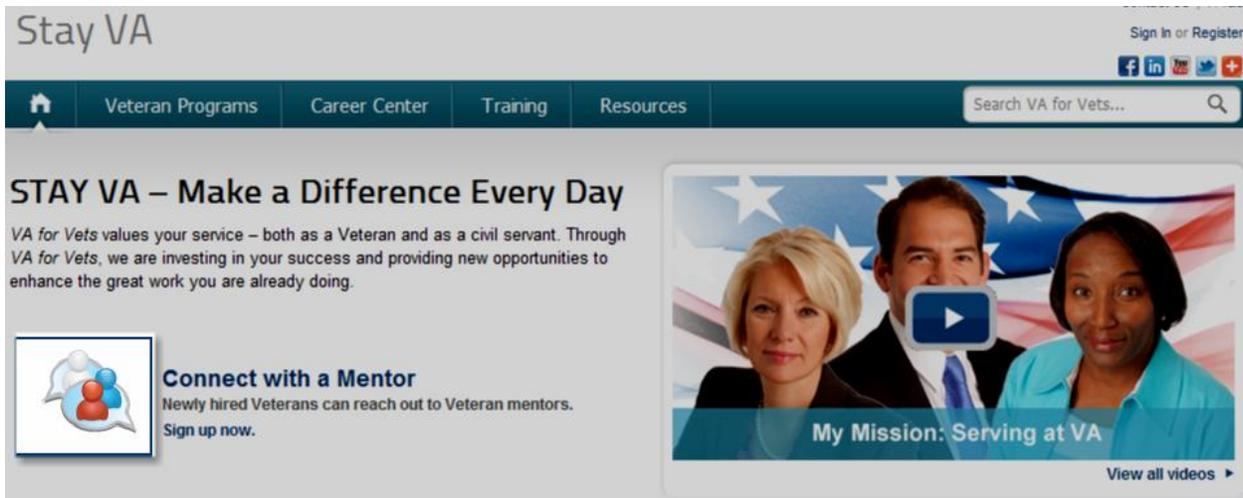
## Signing In

You'll need a VA for Vets account to sign in. If you don't have an account, see "Registering for a VA for Vets Account" on page 2 for step-by-step instructions.

1. From the *VA for Vets* (VAforVets.VA.gov) home page, select **Stay VA**. This takes you to the Stay VA home page.



2. Select **Connect with a Mentor**. This takes you to the Log On page.



Profile

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The information solicited is necessary to accomplish the action requested by the requester. Furnishing the information is voluntary; however, if the information is not furnished, we will be unable to take further action on your request. The principal purpose(s) for which the information will be used is marketing of individual resumes to public and private employers. By voluntarily providing VA for Vets information, you are consenting to VA's use and disclosure of that information in the manner described in this Privacy and Legal Notice, the Department of Veterans Affairs Directive 6515, the VA Handbook 6500, and the Privacy Act.

### Log On

Email:

Password:

[Sign In](#) Or Sign in with DS Logon

[Register](#) | [Forgot your password?](#) | [VA for Vets Home](#)

If you have both a VA for Vets account and a DSLogon account, please use your VA for Vets account to sign in.

For support registering or accessing your account, please contact 1-855-VA4VETS (1-855-824-8387) and select the Technical Assistance option.

3. Enter your email and password.
4. Select **Sign In**. This takes you to the VAMs Forum.

## Signing Out

To sign out, close you web browser.

## Navigating the Forum

You can move from item to item (buttons, fields or menu options) within the VAMs Forum by using the:

- Mouse or
- Keyboard.

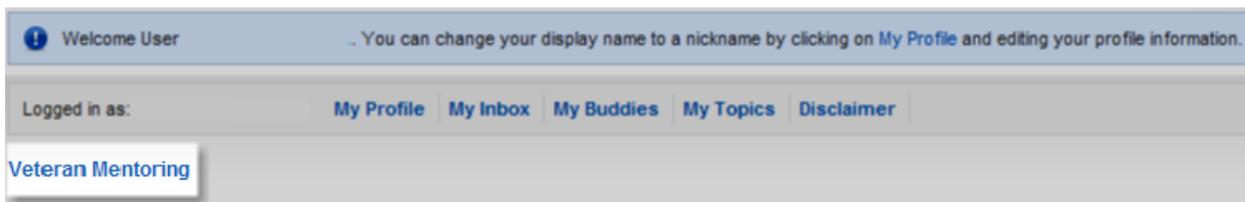
If you choose to navigate the forum using keyboard commands instead of a mouse, you may use the following shortcuts keys:

- Tab navigates you to the next field, button, or link.
- Shift + Tab navigates you backwards to the next field, button, or link.
- Enter selects the button or link the cursor is on.
- F3 activates a drop-down list in a field that has been selected.
- Down directional arrow navigates down an item within a drop-down list
- Up directional arrow navigates up an item within a drop-down list
- Backspace deletes a character within a field
- Spacebar adds a character space within a field

Note: These keyboard shortcuts select an action you can make but you will still need to select “Enter” to execute each selection



To view all categories in the VAMs Forum, select **Veteran Mentoring** beneath the Logged in as bar.



## VAMs Forum Overview

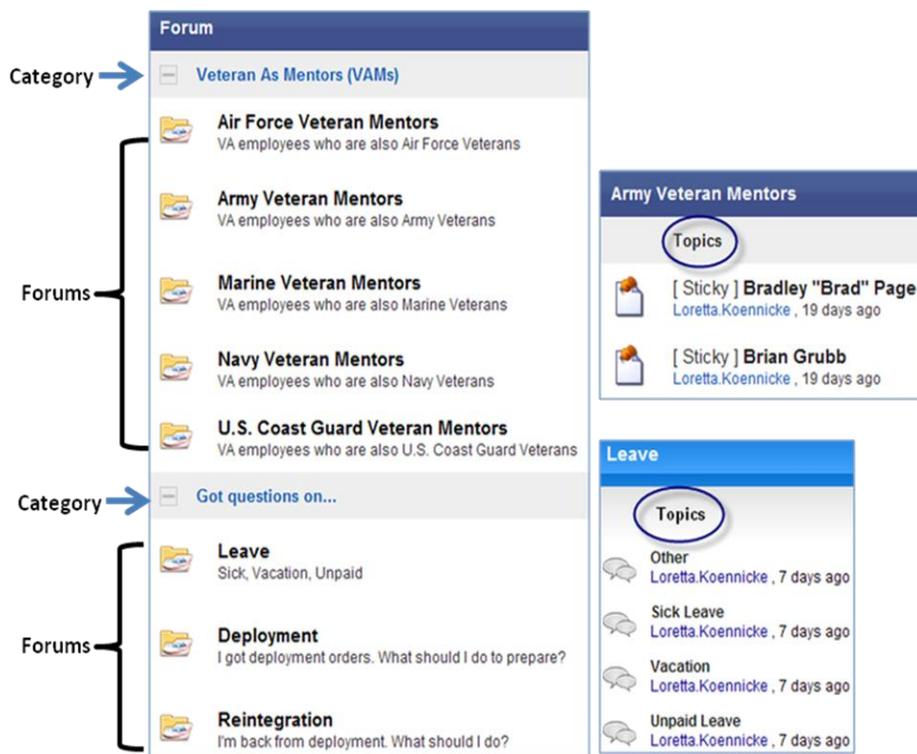
The VAMs forum has two categories:

- Veterans As Mentors (VAMS). This category is moderated, which means the VAMs Forum administrator needs to approve all posts. As a result, your post may not appear for up to 24 hours.
- Got questions on... . This category is not moderated, which means your post shows up immediately.

Each category contains forums and each forum contains topics (see Figure 1). You can:

- Post to topics (See “Posting a Message” on page 10.)
- Watch forums and topics (See “Watching a Forum or Topic” on page 11.)
- Tag a topic as a favorite (See “Tagging a Topic as a Favorite” on page 12.)

Figure 1. Categories, Forums, and Topics



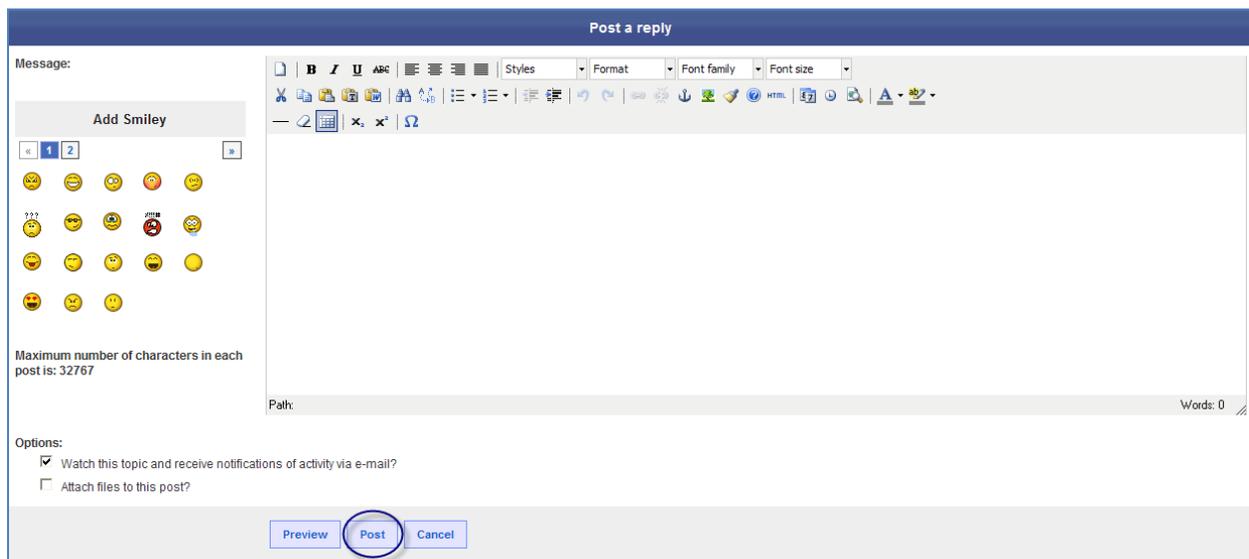
## Posting a Reply

You may post a message in any topic.

1. Select a topic to which you wish to reply.
2. Select **Post Reply**. A Post a reply text box appears.



3. Enter a message.



3. Select **Post**. This posts your message to the topic.



If the topic is within the “Veterans As Mentors” category, then you will not see your message until the moderator has approved it. Otherwise, you’ll see your message immediately.

## Watching a Forum or Topic

If you want to know when someone has responded to a message in a topic or you want to set up a new topic in a forum, you can set up a watch. A watch allows you to see at a glance or be notified by email if the topic or forum that interests you has been updated. You can watch as many topics and forums as you want and cancel watches at any time.

### Watching a Forum

1. Browse to the forum you want to watch.
2. Select **Watch Forum**.

The screenshot shows the 'Army Veteran Mentors' forum page. It features a table with the following columns: Topics, Replies, Views, and Last Post. Two sticky topics are listed:

Topics	Replies	Views	Last Post
 [ Sticky ] <b>Bradley "Brad" Page</b> Loretta.Koennicke , 19 days ago	1	54	Debra M. Mastropaolo → 📄 📧 7 days ago
 [ Sticky ] <b>Brian Grubb</b> Loretta.Koennicke , 19 days ago	1	74	Mark.Holman → 📄 📧 7 days ago

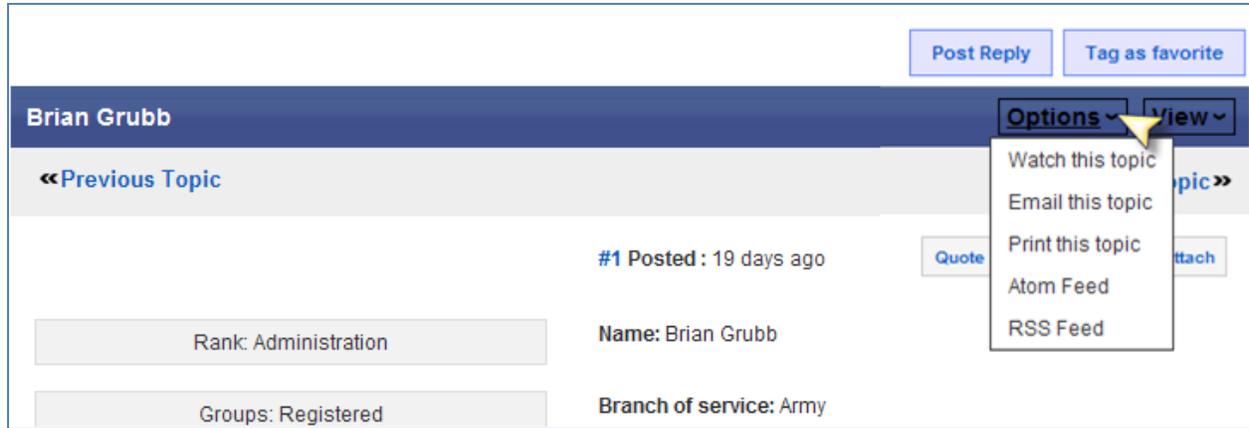
Below the table, there is a section titled 'Users browsing this forum'. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Show Topics' dropdown menu set to 'All'. To its right, the 'Watch Forum' button is circled in blue, followed by links for 'Mark this forum as read', 'Rss Feed', and 'Atom Feed'.

This updates your setting to watch the forum and changes the link to Unwatch Forum.

To cancel watching the forum, select **Unwatch Forum**.

## Watching a Topic

1. Browse to the topic you want to watch.
2. Select Options from the topic's bar. A drop-down menu appears.



3. Select **Watch this topic**. This topic will be watched and the option on the menu changes to Unwatch this topic.

If you decide to stop watching the topic, select **Unwatch this topic** from the drop-down menu.

## Tagging a Topic as a Favorite

Tagging a topic as a favorite allows you a way to quickly locate topics you are interested in seeing.

To tag a topic as a favorite:

1. Browse to the topic you want to tag.
2. Select **Tag as favorite**. This tags the topic as a favorite and changes the button to Untag as favorite. .

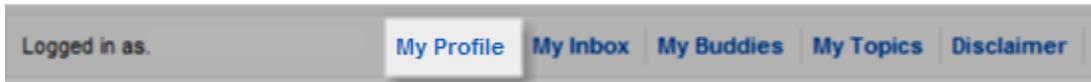


If you decide to untag the topic, select **Untag as favorite**.

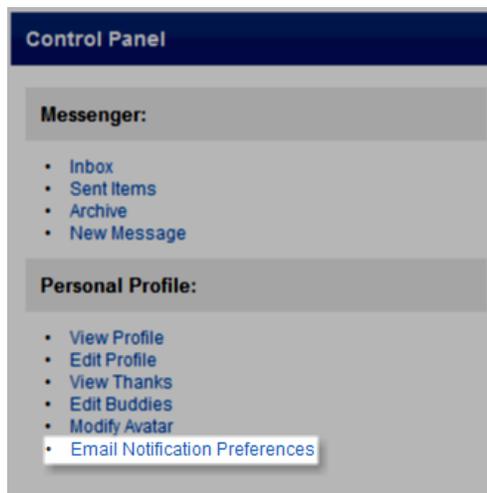
## Setting Email Notification Preferences

If you want to receive an email notification for watched forums or topics, then you'll need to indicate that on your profile.

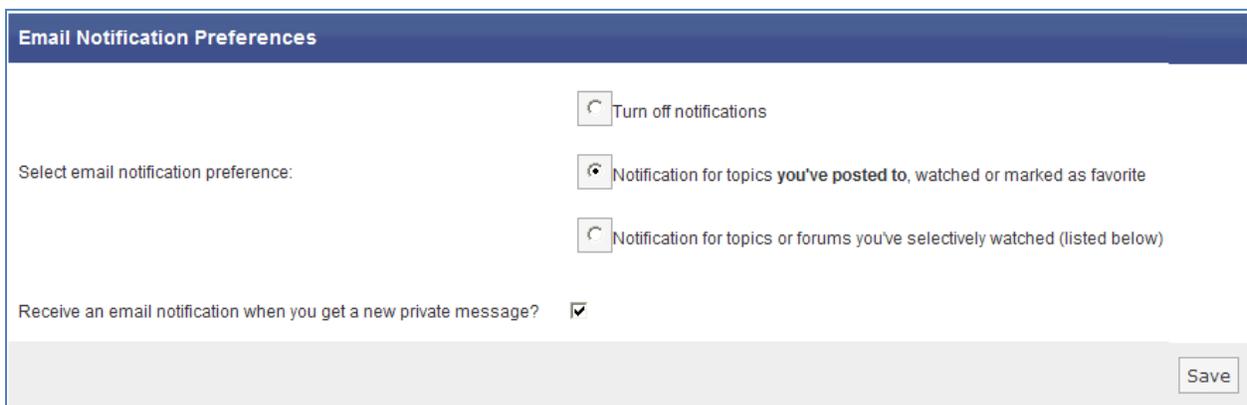
1. Select **My Profile**. This takes you to the control panel.



2. From the Control Panel, select **Email Notification Preferences**. This takes you to the email notification preferences page.



3. Select your email notification preferences.



The lower half of the page lists the forums and topics you selected to watch.

The preferences are:

- **Turn off notifications** - This options turns off all notifications and you won't receive any emails.
- **Notification for topics you've posted to, watched or marked as favorite** - You will receive an email notification:
  - when someone has posted a new message in a topic you have posted in before
  - on topics you selected to watch or marked as favorite
  - on topics in forums you selected to watch.
- **Notification for topics or forums you've selectively watched (listed below)** - You will receive an email notification when someone has posted a new message in a topic or forum you have selected to watch. The forum lists the watch forums beneath the email preferences.
- **Receive an email notification when you get a new private message?** - You can turn on (check the box) or turn off (no check in the box) to receive email notifications when you receive a private message through the VAMs Forum.



To keep track of all posts to forums and topics that interest you, select **Notification for topics you've posted to, watched or marked as favorite**.

4. Select **Save**.

### Cancelling Watched Forums and Topics

1. From the Email Notification Preferences page, select the checkbox that corresponds to the forum or topic you would like to unwatch.
2. Select **Unwatch**. This removes the forum or topic from the list.

Watched Forums				
Forum	Watched Topics	Replies	Last Post	
<a href="#">Air Force Veteran Mentors</a>	6	10		<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Marine Veteran Mentors</a>	2	1	Thursday, August	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="button" value="Unwatch"/>

Watched Topics				
Topic	Replies	Views	Last Post	
<a href="#">USERRA and deployment</a>	0	7	Tuesday, August 28, 2012 3:06:	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Brian Grubb</a>	1	78	Monday, August 27, 2012 8:34:4	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="button" value="Unwatch"/>

## Sending Private Messages

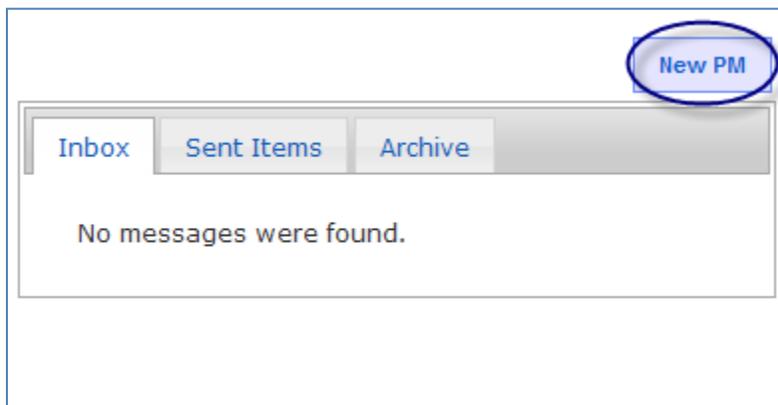
Private messages allow VAMs Forum members to have private one-on-one conversations with each other.

To send a private message (PM):

1. Select **My Inbox**. This takes you to your inbox.



2. Select **New PM**. This takes you to the Post a Private Message page.



3. Enter your message, then select **Post**. Your private message is posted to the member you selected.

