

## **1<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT SERVICE OFFICER VA & R REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2023**



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### **VA NEWS & INFORMATION:**

Did you know, according to VA Claims Insider, veterans comprise 10.6% of all homeless in the U.S., which can be attributed in part to the challenges of transitioning from military service to civilian life and addictions by medications (prescribed or self-medicating) for post-traumatic stress or dealing with pain of injuries incurred while serving

Over 1.3 million veterans are receiving compensation for this condition alone. However, many veterans who have service-connected disabilities do not seek compensation for their conditions, either due to a lack of awareness or a belief that the process is too difficult. It is important for veterans to understand that seeking compensation for service-connected disabilities is not only their right, but can also provide them with the necessary support and resources to manage their conditions and improve their quality of life.

Did you know if you served in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Syria and suffered injuries due to an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) or Explosive Formed Penetrator (EFP), you could be entitled to significant compensation? These injuries are often backed by Iran's state-sponsored terrorism activities.

Did you know as of the August 18, 2023, the VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard has shown more claims for hypertensive vascular disease, a result of high blood pressure, than any other condition since it began processing PACT Act claims? The VA had granted benefits for 79% of those claims.

Did you know there are 4 common types of dementia? Some of the most common types of dementia are; 1. Alzheimer's disease: This is a series of changes to the brain's nerve cells that happens most commonly in older adults. It's the most common cause of dementia in older adults. 2. Vascular Dementia: A stroke or series of strokes can cause brain damage that leads to dementia. 3. Lewy Body Dementia: Abnormal proteins called Lewy bodies can build up in the brain and cause damage. 4. Frontotemporal Degeneration: This type of dementia happens when there is damage to the frontal and temporal lobes. At one time, dementia was accepted as a normal part of aging. But it's actually caused by ongoing damage to cells in the brain.

Did you know officials from the Navy and Department of Justice recently announced plans for new fast-track financial settlements for veterans and family members poisoned by toxic water at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune that could benefit tens of thousands of individuals already awaiting compensation for their illnesses? The new process will grant between \$100,000 and \$550,000 to victims, but will only cover specific conditions such as kidney cancer, Parkinson's

disease and leukemia. Individuals who do not qualify for the program or who wish to seek additional damages can still use civil claims against the government for possible relief.

Did you know the Navy has begun notifying more than 3,700 medically discharged sailors and Marines of their eligibility for a new physical evaluation board hearing? The hearing could result in an upgrade to their medical retirement. Over the next several months, eligible veterans medically discharged between September 12, 2016, and June 11, 2018, are to receive a letter from the Secretary of the Navy Council of Review Boards asking whether they want to have their cases reconsidered.

Did you know "accrued benefits" are benefits that are due to the dependent survivor based on an existing decision on a claim for benefits in the veteran's claims file at the date of death, but paid to the veteran prior to his passing?

Did you know veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) who are diagnosed with any of five newly added presumptive service-connected ailments will have an easier path to receive additional disability pay under new regulations developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)?

Did you know the compensation amount for Camp Lejeune disability claims are determined solely by a claimant's diagnosis and duration of exposure to the contaminated Camp Lejeune water? The compensation amount takes into account the severity or duration of the illness, the treatment required, and the manner in which the claimant's disease impacts their life. Furthermore, if a claimant suffers from multiple qualifying diseases, they can only be compensated for one disease.

Did you know a "VA compensation issue" refers to any challenge or problem faced by veterans in receiving the compensation they are entitled to for disabilities or illnesses resulting from their military service? These issues can vary from delays in processing claims to disagreements regarding disability ratings. It is crucial for veterans to be aware of their rights and options when dealing with these issues to ensure they receive the compensation they deserve. Seeking assistance from veterans service organizations or legal professionals specializing in VA disability claims can greatly aid in navigating and resolving these issues.

Did you know a military funeral can take place at a private cemetery, a state veterans cemetery, or a cemetery that is part of the Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration? Veterans from all military branches qualify for a military funeral, regardless of rank, whether or not they died in combat. They could have been active duty, Reserves, National Guard, retired, or a veteran of military service. For troops who die while on active duty, families may request both a burial and an interment allowance to assist with the cost of the funeral arrangements. For service members who die in a non-service related death, partial reimbursements may apply.

Did you know Hepatitis C (Hep C) is a viral infection that affects the liver and can cause severe health complications? Many veterans and active duty military personnel may have contracted Hep C during their service due to various risk factors. If you are a military veteran who has been diagnosed with Hep C, you may be entitled to compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Did you know a veteran who was on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval, or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized under the laws administered by the U.S. Department of Defense is considered a "protected veteran?" According to information from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, federal law defines "period of war" as including World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era, and the Persian Gulf War, which is defined as August 2, 1990, to the present. Therefore, a veteran who was on active duty during any of those periods (and was not dishonorably discharged) is an "active duty wartime" veteran.



**Remember..... That all gave some, but many gave all!**