

1ST DISTRICT SERVICE OFFICER VA & R REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 24



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VA NEWS & INFORMATION:

Did you know for a spouse to receive DIC (Dependency-indemnity-Compensation) VA Benefits, the veteran-spouse must have a service-connected disability listed on the death certificate as a primary cause of death or a contributing cause of death?

Did you know the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recommends eligible veterans apply for disability compensation benefits through the VA's eBenefits online portal? However, veterans may also apply by mail with VA Form 21-526EZ, in person at your regional benefits office, or with help from a trained professional?

Did you know you can use your smartphone to check-in for your appointments at your local VA facility? If your VA facility offers mobile check-in, you'll see a poster titled "Have an appointment? Check in with your smartphone." Text or scan the QR code on the poster to start the process.

Did you know Gulf War veterans have been fighting with the VA to get presumptive service-connected coverage for brain cancer from exposures during military activity in and around several military installations? The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has officially recognized brain cancer, along with several other medical conditions, as being linked to exposure to ionizing radiation under 38 C.F.R. 3.311. This recognition is a significant step forward in ensuring that veterans who have been exposed to radiation during their service receive the appropriate medical care and support they need.

Some of you may have heard that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it will be replacing VA disability compensation for all service-connected veterans. Many of you may have been informed that this change will impact many veterans who rely on these benefits to support themselves and their families. Allegedly, the new system is expected to provide a more streamlined and efficient process for reviewing and awarding benefits.

Did you know the VA issued revised Form 10-10EZ Application for Health Benefits, effective in July 2021? The form now has a question concerning whether a veteran is applying for enrollment or for registration. Some veterans need only to apply for registration and do not have to complete the entire Form 10-10EZ. For example, a veteran who served in Vietnam or Blue Water Navy near the Vietnam coastline who qualify, need only register for VA health care by virtue of the presumptive nature of exposures they experienced while in Vietnam. The income means test does not apply to such veterans. Another change is gender identification which now has "birth gender"; male or female, and "Self-identified gender Identity"; male, female, transmale/transman/female-to-male, transfemale/transwoman/male-to-female and finally the option to choose not to answer. The new form also does not inquire as to your "net worth," which was earlier part of the "means" test for enrollment. These changes do not alter the income test used by the VA to determine whether the veteran must pay deductibles, co-pays and out-of-pocket maximums.

Did you know the VA will not start processing your disability claim until you submit a complete application and all required evidence? During the year you have from your intent to file, you must gather and compile the most compelling and thorough evidence possible. This may include military or personal medical files, buddy statements, service records, etc.

If you are a veteran who has been denied disability benefits, you may want to consider submitting a VA stressor letter. This type of letter can be a powerful tool in supporting your claim for disability benefits. A stressor letter is a statement written by the veteran outlining the stressful events they experienced during their service, which may have contributed to their current condition. This letter can help to establish a clear link between the veteran's service and their current disability, which can be crucial in determining their eligibility for benefits. Without a stressor letter, it can be difficult to prove that the veteran's disability is service-related, which may result in a denial of benefits. Therefore, if you are a veteran seeking disability benefits, it is important to understand the importance of a VA stressor letter and to consider submitting one as part of your claim.

Did you know the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has issued a warning to veterans regarding the harmful effects of prolonged exposure to JP-4?

According to ATSDR, JP-4 vapor can cause a range of health issues including headache, dizziness, nausea, depression, anxiety, memory loss, and irritability. Veterans who have been exposed to JP-4 should seek medical advice as soon as possible. It is important for veterans to be aware of the potential hazards associated with JP-4 and take necessary precautions to protect their health.

Did you know a prostrating migraine is a severe form of migraine headache that can cause intense pain and debilitating symptoms? The term "prostrating" refers to the way this type of migraine can leave the sufferer feeling completely exhausted and unable to function. In this type of migraine, the pain is typically severe and one-sided, often accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and sound. According to a recent study, it has been found that a significant percentage of veterans suffer from prostrating migraines. This new information highlights the urgent need for better treatment options and support for veterans who suffer from this debilitating condition.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has taken possession of the newly constructed building on Olympia Field Drive and are in the process of moving in equipment and furniture. Staff members are also being hired for the clinic. An opening date has not yet been set for the 8,500-square-foot outpatient clinic that will serve veterans from Waukesha, Walworth, Washington, Jefferson and Dodge counties.

Did you know the bilateral factor rule is used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to calculate the disability rating of veterans with impairments on both sides of their body? For instance, if a veteran has a disability that affects both arms, both legs, or paired skeletal muscles, the VA will use the bilateral factor rule in these calculations. Specifically, the bilateral factor rule is defined by statute as existing when "a partial disability results from disease or injury of both arms, or of both legs, or of paired skeletal muscles, the ratings for the disabilities of the right and left sides will be combined as usual, and 10% of this value will be added before proceeding with further combinations."

Did you know in an essential development for the welfare of U.S. military veterans, those who developed hypertension during or after their military service may now be eligible for disability benefits from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)? The key to unlocking these benefits lies in establishing a service connection that proves an unequivocal link between hypertension and military service. This is particularly relevant for veterans exposed to the lethal herbicide, Agent Orange, during the Vietnam War Era.

Did you know one of the main reasons for the denial of VA disability claims is the lack of sufficient medical evidence? This primarily involves two aspects: incomplete medical records and insufficient diagnostic evidence.

Did you know the Fisher House Foundation is known for supporting the military community, including providing a “home away from home” for military and veteran families near military medical centers while their loved ones are hospitalized? Also, the nonprofit foundation created the Scholarships for Military Children program in 2001 in partnership with the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) to recognize the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and celebrate the role commissaries play in enhancing the military quality of life.



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