

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



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VA NEWS & INFORMATION:

Did you know some older veterans live with the inability to perceive temperature changes? Particularly if they have some form of dementia or cognitive decline. As a result, they won't respond appropriately to heat, both biologically (through sweating) and behaviorally (by moving to someplace cool).

As you prepare for your Compensation and Pension exam, remember that you are not alone in this process. Hill & Ponton have provided valuable insights to guide you through this journey. Remember to approach the exam with confidence and honesty, knowing that your well-being is at the forefront of this evaluation. Take the time to prepare mentally and emotionally, and trust that your experiences and struggles are valid. Tips from Hill & Ponton below:

- **Prepare Ahead of Time:** Keep detailed records of your condition, know what you're being evaluated for, and have all necessary forms ready.
- **Be Honest and Detailed:** Clearly explain your symptoms and how they affect your daily life. If you have "bad days," describe their frequency and impact.
- **Bring a Support Person:** Someone close to you can provide additional insights and help observe the details of your exam, even if they're not allowed in the exam room.
- **Get a Copy of the Results:** Request a copy of your C&P exam results from the VA. This can be helpful if you need to dispute the findings later.
- **Multiple Visits May Be Needed:** If you file multiple claims, be prepared for multiple exams. Each exam should help support your claim, so approach each one with care.

Chart Reviews: Sometimes the VA may do a chart review instead of an in-person exam. If you feel a chart review is insufficient, consider seeking a second opinion from an independent medical facility.

Did you know compared with usual care alone, partnership with a trained psychiatric service dog was associated with lower PTSD symptom severity and better psychosocial functioning for U.S. military members and veterans? It seems as if service dog partnership may serve as an effective complementary intervention for military service-related PTSD, according to a recent study by JAMA.

Did you know previously denied veterans can now reapply for federal benefits. Starting July 2, 2024, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has expanded access to benefits to thousands of veterans who had been considered ineligible, including some kicked out for homosexuality. Veteran Services Offices (VSO) are preparing for former service members to come forward and appeal their previously denied benefits.

Did you know SSDI and VA disability compensations are not affected by each other and you may be eligible to receive both of them at the same time? However, you do need to apply for them separately.

Did you know before asbestos was identified as carcinogenic, it was held in high regard for its characteristic resistance to heat and fire, and for its strength? Asbestos was also accessible and inexpensive, so the military explicitly ordered its use in the construction of barracks, mess halls, hospitals, administrative buildings, and other structures, as well as to insulate numerous parts of vehicles, aircraft, and ships.

Ischemic Heart Disease (IHD) is a condition in which fatty deposits (atheroma) accumulate in the cells lining the wall of the coronary arteries. These fatty deposits build up gradually and irregularly in the large branches of the two main coronary arteries which encircle the heart and are the main source of its blood supply. This process is called atherosclerosis which leads to narrowing or hardening of the blood vessels supplying blood to the heart muscle (the coronary arteries). This results in ischemia (inability to provide adequate oxygen) to heart muscle and this can cause damage to the heart muscle. Complete occlusion of the blood vessel leads to a heart attack (myocardial infarction).

It is disheartening to acknowledge that veterans are disproportionately affected by IHD. This disparity highlights the urgent need to address the health issues faced by those who have bravely served our country.

The brave men and women who have served our country face a significant health challenge in the form of pancreatic cancer, a disease that has affected a disproportionate number of veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. These individuals, who have already sacrificed so much for our nation, now find themselves battling a formidable opponent in the form of this aggressive disease. Despite these adversities, their resilience, courage, and unwavering spirit continue to inspire us all, reminding us of the incredible strength and determination that defines our veterans.

Did you know families have two years from the date of passing of a veteran to apply for burial benefits? The VA will review the application and, if the veteran was honorably discharged, reimburse up to \$948 for a cremation and up to \$231 for an urn. Veterans who die from a service-connected disability are eligible for higher death benefits, up to \$2,000.

Did you know there are rumors that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may consider removing VA enrollment for veterans who have no compensable service-connected disabilities and annual incomes above a certain national threshold? Because the VA can only add as many new enrollees each year as its funding allows, veterans are sorted into eight different enrollment priority groups depending on factors including their service history, disability rating, income level, and qualification for Medicaid. The VA may end new enrollments for veterans in the lowest two priority groups and disenroll those who are already in the VA system.



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

