



Wounded Warrior Voice

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FROM THE DESK OF COL GADSON: The Holiday Season

As Warrior Care Month comes to a close, I want to reiterate that taking care of Soldiers and Veterans is something we do every day. Observing Warrior Care Month is an opportunity to highlight the significance of keeping our population healthy and safe, but we must remember that what we provide to our wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Veterans, and Families transcends past this one month. I continue to stand by our commitment and dedication to these resilient men, women, and their Families..

At the end of the month, the Thanksgiving holiday provided us an opportunity to come together, remember our blessings, and reflect and regain balance in our lives. As we continue to celebrate the holiday season, enjoying this special time of year as Family and friends gather together to share experiences and celebrate the joy and excitement of spending time together, I want to remind everyone how important it is to look out for each other. Be mindful of everyone in your community because for some, the holiday season brings feelings of loneliness, stress, despair, and depression. I encourage everyone to reach out to people who need help and support, and as you celebrate with Family and friends, remember those who are separated from their Families and those who are on the front lines. It is important we work as a community to have the best holiday season as possible. I am extremely thankful for the strength of character and perseverance of our AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families and for our fantastic staff at AW2. I wish everyone a happy holiday season.

VA UPDATE: VA Publishes Final Regulation on Clothing Allowance Eligibility--Expands Criteria for Veterans with Multiple Qualifying Prosthetic and Orthopedic Devices or Skin Condition Medications

Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) Eric K. Shinseki announced the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register on the clothing allowance that expands the

eligibility criteria for Veterans with multiple prosthetic and orthopedic devices or skin conditions caused by prescribed medications.

“Veterans whose service-connected disabilities require prosthetic appliances and skin medications deserve financial assistance for the extra clothing they have to purchase,” said Shinseki. “A federal appeals court has ruled that Veterans may be entitled to more than one clothing allowance, and we are adjusting our regulations to make sure Veterans get the benefit of that decision.”

The new regulation provides the criteria for more than one annual clothing allowance in situations where distinct garments are affected and ensures Veterans are adequately compensated for any damage to clothing.

Veterans, who because of a service-connected disability, wear or use a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance that tends to wear out or tear clothing, are eligible for payment of an annual clothing allowance.

Examples of appliances include an artificial limb, rigid extremity brace, rigid spinal or cervical brace, wheelchair, crutches or other devices prescribed for the Veteran’s service-connected disability.

Veterans, who because of a service-connected skin condition use a medication that caused irreparable damage or stains to outer garments, are also eligible for payment of annual clothing allowance.

The change makes VA’s clothing allowance regulations consistent with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit’s holding in the case of *Sursely v. Peake*. The application period for an annual clothing allowance is August 1 through July 31 of each calendar year. Payment of more than one clothing allowance to qualifying Veterans will occur in calendar year 2012.

VA is in the process of revising VA Form 10-8678, Application For Annual Clothing Allowance, to accommodate application for more than one annual clothing allowance. Currently, the single annual clothing allowance is \$716.

In the meantime, if a Veteran wishes to claim more than one allowance, the Veteran may continue to download and complete the current forms at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-8678-fill%204-08.pdf> and <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4138-ARE.pdf>, to indicate that he or she desires consideration for more than one annual clothing allowance.

Veterans are also encouraged to visit VA’s web portal eBenefits for compensation information on the clothing allowance and other VA benefits.

Veterans can also contact their nearest VA regional office at (800) 827-1000 for more information about applying for more than one clothing allowance or their AW2 Advocate.

Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL)

Are you eligible to receive caregiver compensation?

Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL) was authorized by the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. SCAADL helps offset the loss of income by a primary caregiver who provides non-medical care, support, and assistance for a servicemember that has incurred a permanent catastrophic injury or illness while serving on active duty. The servicemember must be serving on active duty but does not have to be in a Warrior Transition Unit/Community Based Warrior Transition Unit (WTU/CBWTU) to receive SCAADL. If you, or someone you know, has applied for Traumatic Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) or require(s) a Non-Medical Attendant (NMA), go to the

WTC website, <http://www.WTC.army.mil/> for additional information or contact a member of your recovery team (to include the primary care manager, nurse case manager, Recovery Care Coordinator, Non-Medical Case Manager, AW2 Advocate, or unit leadership) for the SCAADL application and guidance. Servicemembers not assigned to a WTU/CBWTU can contact the Ombudsman at their local Military Treatment Facility (MTF) for information and assistance.

Under the "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010," additional VA services are now available to seriously injured post 9/11 Veterans and their Family caregivers through a new program of comprehensive assistance for Family caregivers. VA is now accepting applications for these services. Veterans eligible for this program are those who sustained a serious injury including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma, or other mental disorder incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, on or after September 11, 2001. They must also be in need of personal care services because of an inability to perform one or more activities of daily living and/or need supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological impairment or injury. Veterans must be enrolled for VA health services to be eligible for the caregiver benefits. Benefits include: monthly stipend for primary Family caregiver, travel expenses (including lodging and per diem while accompanying Veterans undergoing care), mental health services and counseling, access to health care insurance (if the caregiver is not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan), caregiver training provided by Easter Seals and respite care (not less than 30 days per year).

If you think you fit the criteria for these new services, please visit <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/> to answer some preliminary questions and download an application. You may also call (877) 222-8387 for additional application assistance.

Servicemembers that require assistance with activities of daily living after they have transitioned out of the service may be eligible for the Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Veterans may download a copy of the caregiver program application (VA CG 10-10) at www.caregiver.va.gov. The application enables Veterans to designate one primary Family Caregiver and up to two secondary Family caregivers if desired. Caregiver Support Coordinators are available at every VA medical center to assist Veterans and their Family caregivers with the application process. Additional application assistance can be found by via phone at (877) 222-8387.

FINANCE:

Military Retiree Pay Dates Changed

Retirees may have noticed that payday for military retirees and those who receive portions of retired pay changed for September and will change for December as well.

The 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requires military retiree pay to be processed on the first day of the month. When that day falls on a weekend or national holiday, the pay date is moved to the previous business day.

This year payments normally scheduled for October 3 were issued on September 30, and payments normally scheduled for January 3, 2012, will be issued on December 20, 2011. For the calendar year 2011, military retirees will receive 13 payments rather than the normal 12 payments.

The thirteenth payday on December 30 falls within the 2011 tax year, which could affect the tax liability of some retirees and those who receive portions of their retired pay. Customers should speak with a tax advisor, the Internal Revenue Service, or their state tax authority to determine if their tax withholding will satisfy federal and state income taxes when they file returns next year.

This change affects regular, retired pay, Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay, and Combat Related Special Compensation. The new rule also applies to retiree

allotments, garnishments, and court-ordered former spouse and child support payments. It does not affect annuity payments.

For tax year 2012 and beyond, retirees will receive their normal 12 payments.

FINANCE:

Tax Season Preparation 2011

Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) customers with myPay access can retrieve their tax statements electronically up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery.

MyPay maintains historical data for the current tax year (for retirees) and current tax year and two prior years (for annuitants). Tax statements available through myPay are approved for use by the IRS and have several benefits:

To ensure your retired pay account is current and up to date; retirees should review their account at: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.

All retirees who access myPay have automatically consented to receive only an electronic 1099-R. The consent remains in effect each year unless you change your delivery option within myPay by turning on/off hard copy of 1099R under "Taxes".

Retirees not enrolled in the myPay system may retrieve their form by calling (800) 321-1080. Select option 4, enter your Social Security Number, and the form will be sent to the address on file. To speak with a customer service representative, select options 5,1,5,0.

Retirees will receive one 1099-R reflecting both taxable retired pay and taxable Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) received during the year. Retirees who received any taxable Special Compensation for the Severely Disabled (SCSD) payment(s) during the year will receive two 1099-Rs, one for taxable retired pay, and one for SCSD.

Retirees must keep their mailing address current with retired pay. If mailing address is not current, retirees will not receive information concerning their account sent from retired pay. To verify your mailing address with myPay, following instruction listed below:

Access myPay account

Go to: Pay Changes

Select: correspondence address

Verify information is correct, if not update system with your current mailing address and select "Save"

Special note: Any change to your retired pay account will not take effect for 30 calendar days after change has been submitted.

Retirees have the responsibility to ensure their retired pay account is accurate. The key to receiving your military retired pay, and other important information, in a timely and efficient manner is to make sure that you:

- Maintain a myPay account
- Keep your personal information current with retired pay, including your mailing address, direct deposit information, Arrears of Pay beneficiary and e-mail address
- Updated your tax information as required
- Review your allotments annually, to make sure they are still correct

Notify DFAS immediately if any of the following information changes:

- Mailing address
- Direct deposit bank information (regardless if Veteran is receiving full VA benefits)
- Arrears of Pay beneficiary (marriage, divorce, death in Family)

- Email address (for myPay users only)

For retirees, annuitants, beneficiaries, and supervisors
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
P.O. Box 7131
London, KY 40742-7131

For non-receipt of payment claims:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
P.O. Box 998005
Cleveland, OH 44199-1126

Fax Retired Pay at (800) 469-8459
Annuitant/Supervisor Pay (800) 982-8459
Claims for non-receipt of payment (216) 522-5898

THE BLOG UPDATE: November 2011

Army Ten-Miler-Race Day

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/army-ten-miler-race-day/>

AW2 Family Continues to Serve Country and Wounded

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/AW2-Family-continues-to-serve-country-and-wounded/>

Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL)

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/special-compensation-for-assistance-with-activities-of-daily-living-scaadl/>

Warrior Transition Battalion Tips Off Warrior Care Month at Olympic Training Center

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/warrior-transition-battalion-tips-off-warrior-care-month-at-olympic-training-center>

WTC Will Host Warrior Care Month All Service Sitting Volleyball Tournament

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/WTC-will-host-warrior-care-month-all-service-sitting-volleyball-tournament/>

Advocate This!

<http://AW2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/advocate-this/>

Stress Less Heal More Reduces Stress by Negotiating Bills for Wounded Warriors

<http://AW2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/stress-less-heal-more-reduces-stress-by-negotiating-bills-for-wounded-warriors/>

AW2 Veteran's Rehabilitation Is Definitely "On Par"

<http://AW2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/AW2-veterans-rehabilitation-is-definitely-on-par/>

Educating and Informing Others on AW2 through Hockey

<http://AW2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/11/educating-and-informing-others-on-AW2-through-hockey-2/>

Commander's Drumbeat: The Excitement of

AUSA http://www.WTC.army.mil/AW2/community_support/index.html

Six Former Warriors in Transition Graduate from WTU Cadre Course

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/09/nine-eleven-summit/>

Commander's Drumbeat: Warrior Care Month

<http://WTC.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/10/commanders-drumbeat-warrior-care-month/>

A Throw of a Lifetime

<http://AW2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/10/a-throw-of-a-lifetime/>

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