

1ST DISTRICT SERVICE OFFICER VA & R REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2022



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Did you know the Social Security Administration has a policy to expedite disability claims by veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation rating of 100% Permanent & Total (P&T)? Under the new process, Social Security will treat these veterans' applications as high priority and issue expedited decisions, similar to the way the agency currently handles disability claims from wounded warriors.

Military retirees and veterans receiving disability pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs are likely to see record monthly check increases for the second year running thanks to the pace of inflation, according to new estimates. The annual VA disability pay and military retirement cost-of-living pay adjustment, known as COLA, is typically tied to the Social Security rate change, which will likely be announced in October. An early projection based on national inflation data by The Senior Citizens League (TSCL), a nonpartisan senior advocacy nonprofit, estimates rates will rise by 9.6%. That increase would be the highest veterans and seniors have seen since 1981, when it went up 11.2% in response to inflation at the time, according to a TSCL press release.

U.S. Marines who may have been exposed to poisonous water between 1953 and 1987 while stationed at Camp Lejeune may be eligible for disability benefits.

Veterans who now suffer from any of these eight diseases may be eligible for VA disability benefits:

- Adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia or other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease.

Veterans and family members who suffer from any of these 15 conditions may qualify for healthcare benefits:

- Bladder cancer
- breast cancer
- esophageal cancer
- female infertility
- hepatic sterosis
- kidney cancer
- leukemia
- lung cancer
- miscarriage
- multiple myeloma
- myelodysplastic syndromes
- Neurobehavioral effects
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- renal toxicity

Did you know the American Legion was formed in 1919 to assist veterans returning from World War I as they transitioned back into the civilian life? Decades later, the American Legion was instrumental in the drafting and passage of what is commonly referred to as the GI Bill. Today, as veteran suicides continue to happen at a rate of 17 or so a day, the American Legion is now focused on the prevention of suicides, starting with at least one a day.

Did you know the Veterans Information Act will go into effect September 13, 2022. The Veterans Information Act requires health care workers and caseworkers to inform veterans about the available health care benefits through either the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or other veteran service organizations.

Did you know the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is extending relief to veterans who may be struggling to repay benefit debts due to financial hardship? More than 500,000 veterans owe the VA money tied to disability compensation, non-service-connected pension payments and education benefits. Those veterans can apply to have required payments suspended through the end of 2022, a temporary hardship exemption, the agency announced Monday. Notices of the option will be mailed in debt notification letters beginning in September 2022.

Did you know the VA launched a new mobile application, "VA: Health and Benefits," which centralizes health and benefits information, enabling veterans to better navigate the agency's services? VA soft-launched the application in August 2021; since then, more than 800,000 veterans have downloaded it. Through the interface, veterans can view and cancel health care appointments, view claims and appeals status, upload documentation, message their doctor, locate facilities and more. It also provides access to the VA Crisis Line. Go to your app store and download free app today!

Did you know if your loved one is a veteran, they may qualify for the Veteran Directed Care Program? This program is designed for veterans who need daily assistance and for caregivers who need extra help. Veterans or their family caregivers are given a budget to manage their care and help them age in place in their own home or community

Did you know it is a common mistake made by VA raters of giving veterans a rating much lower than what they actually qualify for? Experienced VSOs, attorneys, and veteran agents typically remind their clients they don't have to accept the initial rating the VA gives them.

Did you know if a veterans disability is the result of intentional misconduct or wrongdoing, VA raters will not rate the disability? For example, if a veteran were to intentionally injure himself to get out of a military assignment, separate from the military or to potentially gain profit from an injury at time of separation, VA raters will not assign that injury a rating.

Did you know when considering the residuals of a veterans' injury, it is essential to trace the medical-industrial history of the veteran from the original injury, considering the nature of the injury and the attendant circumstances, and the requirements for, and the effect of, treatment over past periods, and the course of the recovery to date?



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