

Warrior Support News

For National Guard Soldiers and Airmen

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National Guard Bureau
J1 - Warrior Support Office
1411 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
Arlington, VA 22202
703.607.0180

USEFUL LINKS:

National Guard Bureau:
ngb.army.mil

Office of Reserve Affairs:
defenseink.mil/ra

Find VA facilities:
va.gov/directory / 877.222.vets

For OIF/OEF Vets:
seamlesstransition.va.gov

Benefits Info:
yba.va.gov / 800.827.1000

Get a copy of your DD214:
vetrecs.archives.gov

Veterans Employment & Training:
dol.gov/vets

Employment info:
vetjobs.com

Education Benefits:
gibill.va.gov / 888.442.4551

Jobs, schools, pay:
militaryconnection.com

Wounded Warrior Website:
aw2portal.com / 800.237.1336

For quality of life info/resources:
militaryhomefront.dod.mil

For transition services:
turbotap.org

For redeployment info:
afterdeployment.org

TO SUBSCRIBE TO THIS
NEWSLETTER:

Email warriorsupport@ng.army.mil

Election Day Info

It may not be too late to request an absentee ballot or register to vote. Each state has different rules regarding voting (e.g., some states do not require registration to vote; some deadlines are upcoming). The Federal Military Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) office provides information and resources for military voters. Check the FVAP website for state-by-state voting instructions and on-line registration and absentee ballot request forms. The FVAP also provides links to service voting information websites.

Call 1.800.438.VOTE or visit www.fvap.gov. You fought for this country—now go out and vote! Election day is Tuesday, November 4th.

VA Changes Disability Rating for TBI and Burns

Due to the medical progress and advances in scientific knowledge, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently revised the disability rating schedule for traumatic brain injury (TBI) and burns, which may increase the compensation given to vets with TBI and burn scars. The two groups who may be affected by these changes are: 1) vets who will be awarded disability compensation for TBI and burn injuries in the future; and 2) vets already receiving compensation for these injuries whose disabilities are reevaluated under the new criteria.

The immediate effects of TBI include loss or alteration of consciousness, amnesia, and sometimes neurological impairments. More than 90% of combat-related TBIs are not visible, and most SMs experience a mild TBI (concussion). Problems resulting from TBI may include headache, sleep difficulties, decreased memory and attention, slower thinking, irritability, and depression. According to VA, as of September 08, more than 5800 OIF/OEF vets are compensated for TBI. If you'd like more info on TBI or think you may have symptoms of TBI, contact your Transition Assistance Advisor (see contact info on next page).

VA Mobile Vet Centers Coming to You!

Recognizing that many veterans don't live close to VA services, the VA has started to deploy its new fleet of 50 mobile Vet Centers around the country. These 38 foot motor coaches will provide outreach and readjustment counseling at active duty, Reserve and National Guard activities, including PDHRAs for returning combat vets. Their goal is to reach rural and underserved veterans and improve access to counseling by bringing services closer to veterans. Although not all states will have a mobile Vet Center calling them home, the mobile Vet Centers will travel across state lines to meet the needs of the veteran population. The motor coaches have spaces for confidential counseling and will carry Vet Center counselors and outreach workers to events and activities as a way to supplement the current 232 Vet Centers, which are scheduled to increase to 271 facilities by the end of 2009.

To find a Vet Center near you and take advantage of their free resources, visit www.vetcenter.va.gov or call during normal business hours 800.905.4675 (Eastern) or 866.496.8838 (Pacific).

NATIONAL CRISIS HOTLINE AVAILABLE TO ANYONE 24/7/365 ---
1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Directors of Psychological Health

Deployment triggers strong emotions for everyone in the family. The joy and excitement of reunion is often mixed with apprehension. Deployment changes everyone, and it can take weeks or months for Guard members to feel reintegrated back into their families. Oftentimes, there are questions about readjustment, and especially what to do for symptoms and diagnoses of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

With all this in mind, the National Guard Bureau recently awarded a national contract to place a Director of Psychological Health (DPH) in every state and territory to be available to Guard and family members. Their comprehensive services will offer direct 24/7/365 telephone access; psychological health resources; case management and follow up; wellness education and information; crisis management services, and much more. They will also provide training to Commanders and briefings to Guard members. The intent of the program is to provide meaningful, helpful and practical assistance to anyone with concerns. The DPH will be part of the J1 office and is dedicated to the National Guard; however, other Service Members will not be turned away. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact CAPT Joan Hunter, RN, MSW at NGB by phone - 703.607.5309.

Incap Pay and VA Compensation

Incapacitation (incap) pay is pay and allowances that a member of a reserve component is entitled to, whenever the member is physically disabled as the result of an injury, illness, or disease incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on active duty or inactive duty training status. It is the Guard member's responsibility to initiate an incap pay claim. Guard and Reserve Members can receive payments for up to six months but may be extended in special cases. However, these benefits are offset by any nonmilitary earned income (such as pay from an employer) received concurrently with the military disability pay.

Does incap pay affect VA disability compensation? The short answer is no because VA disability compensation is not considered earned income. The VA's Office of General Counsel addressed the question of whether VA should withhold compensation payments while members receive incap pay in April 1990 and decided that there is no prohibition against receiving incap pay and VA disability compensation at the same time. The National Guard Bureau's Judge Advocate General's office agrees that incap pay and VA disability pay can both be paid simultaneously.

Extra Earnings For Your Military Service

If you served on active duty any time from 1940 through 2001 (the program ended in January 2002), you may qualify for a higher social security payment because of your military service. The amount may be up to \$1200 per year of earnings credit, credited at the time of application, and this can make a substantial difference in your social security monthly payments when you retire. What you need to do: You must bring your DD-214 to the Social Security Office - and you must ask for this benefit to receive it! For more info, visit the Social Security website: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm> or call 800.772.1213.

Keep this information in your files for when you apply for Social Security down the road. It is NOT just for retirees, BUT it is for anyone who has served on active duty prior to January 2002. This benefit is not automatic, you must ask for it!

Have you contacted the Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) in your state or territory to help guide you through the benefits and entitlements you have earned or would you like to learn more about them? Call 703.607.0180 or go to www.taapmo.com/TAAProgram.htm or email warriorsupport@ng.army.mil to locate the TAA in your state.

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4th. DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!