



## RETIREED MILITARY NEWSLETTER

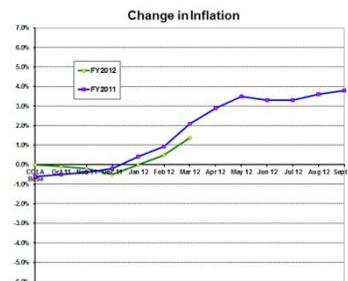
2012



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**COLA.** We have passed the halfway mark for the 2012 fiscal year. So far this year the Cost of Living Adjustment is up almost 1.4 percent above COLA baseline figure.



**VA Work Website.** Last year Congress passed the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 which is designed to provide seamless transition for servicemembers, expands education and training opportunities for Veterans, and provides tax credits for employers who hire service-connected Veterans. On 17 April, the VA launched the VOW website, <http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOW>. Those of you still in the work force may find this useful.

**VA loan limits.** In 2012, the VA loan limits are calculated with a new method, which caused a decrease in limits in certain areas. New VA loan limits range from \$417,000 to \$625,500 in the 48 contiguous states. In Hawaii, Guam, Alaska and U.S. Virgin Islands, VA loan limits range from \$625,500 to \$938,250.

**Agent Orange.** The VA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in Vietnam Vet, VA presumes that the circumstances of his/her service (i.e. exposure to Agent Orange) caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded. The following disabilities may be presumed for those who served in the Republic of Vietnam between 1/9/62 and 5/7/75: Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, some heart diseases, Parkinson's disease, and numerous cancers. For a complete listing of the presumptive diseases see <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp#veterans>. If you do not have access to the web, contact us or stop by the RAO for a copy.

You are urged to contact the nearest VA Activity to see if you qualify for compensation. For further information go to [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/aono3.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/aono3.htm).

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**Crisis Line.** The Veterans Crisis Line is a toll-free, confidential resource that connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Veterans Affairs responders. You and your loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and "Press 1" or chat online at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) to receive free, confidential support 24/7 -- even if you are not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA health care.

The professionals at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping veterans of all ages and circumstances -- from veterans coping with mental health issues that were never addressed to recent veterans struggling with relationships or the transition back to civilian life.

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**I.D. Cards.** On 29 Oct 2010, DOD Human Resources Activity (DHRA) issued a memorandum that cancelled all manually produced government identification (ID) cards. DOD cancelled these typewriter-generated ID cards because they are not post September 11, 2001 (9/11) compliant. Manually produced ID cards lack required advanced security features that enable DOD officials to instantly verify personal identity through a secure and authoritative data source and are no longer considered a valid form of government identification. These ID cards were issued through use of a typewriter and are characteristically recognized by their lack of bar codes and/or magnetic strips. Military **installations are confiscating manually produced ID cards** at base entrances as they pose a high personal identity security threat. Eligible retirees and family members with these ID cards can get the new Uniformed Services ID Card at any ID card issuance facility. To locate the nearest facility, go to <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl>. It is advisable to contact the facility beforehand to determine what documents are needed to obtain the new ID card and whether an appointment is necessary. (Source: Todd Pike 5/2/2012).

**Survivor Benefits.** Survivors of veterans (including spouses, children and dependent parents) who died as the result of a service-connected disease may be eligible for monthly Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits. They may also be eligible for education, home loan and medical care benefits.



The VA offers a wide range of benefits for the surviving spouse, dependent children and dependent parents of deceased veterans. An excellent source of information for surviving spouses is the VA website <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/dependents/spouse.htm>. It lists the various benefits along with their descriptions and provides direct access to the related application forms. If additional assistance is desired, contact a local RAO.

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**TRICARE Overseas.** Tricare has a brochure that addresses the costs associated with TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) options—TOP Prime, TOP Standard, TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, TRICARE Young Adult, and TRICARE For Life—and overseas TRICARE pharmacy and dental benefits. Cost information about catastrophic caps, copayments, cost-shares, deductibles, enrollment fees, and premiums is organized by program option, beneficiary type, and service/benefit. Contact information is also included. The brochure is available for download at:

<http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart/product.aspx?id=714&CID=134&RID=4>.

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The **TRICARE Young Adult** (TYA) Prime option is available for purchase. TYA Prime offers young adult beneficiaries TRICARE Prime coverage for monthly premiums of \$201. To purchase TYA Prime, dependents must be under age 26, unmarried and not eligible for their own employer-sponsored health care coverage. Young adult dependents may also be eligible for TYA Standard whose monthly premium is \$176. Complete information and application forms are available at the TRICARE Young Adult webpage at [www.tricare.mil/tya](http://www.tricare.mil/tya).

**Buddy Finder.** Check out the Military.com Buddy Finder to search over 20 million military records -- Search by name, pay grade, job code, age or installation. [Find old friends and reconnect today](#). If you do not have access to or use a computer, contact a RAO (Retired Activities Office) at a military Base/Station for assistance.

**Blood Donations.** The Armed Services Blood Program is the official military program. Most of us know that many of our brothers-in-arms' lives have been saved as a result of blood donations. You can find Blood Donor Centers at <http://militaryblood.dod.mil>. The next Blood Drive at the Seal Beach Weapons Station will be held at the gym on Monday, June 25. You can sign up in advance through this link:  
[http://www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation-sponsor?field\\_sponsor\\_code\\_value=naval](http://www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation-sponsor?field_sponsor_code_value=naval)

**Campaign Medals.** We periodically field questions about campaign medals and ribbons. E.g. How can I obtain or replace my medals/ribbons? Or what is the proper order of displaying medals?, etc. One website that addresses most of the questions is <http://www.ask.com/questions-about/Military-Campaign-Ribbons> . In many situations there is no cost to the service member or his/her surviving family members.

Relatively recently retired service members might like to know that an additional campaign phase has been approved for the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Accordingly, an additional campaign star corresponding to the campaign phase is now authorized for wear on the campaign medal. Service members who have qualified for the Afghanistan Campaign Medal may display a bronze campaign star on their medal for each designated campaign phase in which they participated. The stars are worn on the suspension and campaign ribbon of the campaign medal. The period for the additional phase, called Transition I runs through a date to be determined. Contact your respective military department for specific implementation guidance. The four previously approved campaign phases are:

- Liberation of Afghanistan: Sept. 11, 2001, to Nov. 30, 2001;
- Consolidation I: Dec. 1, 2001, to Sept. 30, 2006;
- Consolidation II: Oct. 1, 2006, to Nov. 30, 2009; and
- Consolidation III: Dec. 1, 2009, through June 30, 2011.

[Source: AFPS article 2 Nov 2011]

**MWR.** Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Fort Myer, Virginia now has an exception to policy that allows non-Department of Defense federal employees residing and working in close proximity to use bowling center, club pools and tennis courts, as well as access to dining at the clubs or picnic areas, wedding packages and special event equipment rental, including grills and tents. Non-DoD federal employees still must provide proper identification and can use their official ID cards. For more information, visit

the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall FMWR website <http://www.jbmhfmwr.com> or call 703-696-0299.

**Discount tickets.** We periodically remind you that discount tickets to amusements, etc. are available at Base/Station ITT offices. We also realize that getting to the offices may be difficult or inconvenient for some retirees. Check this web site [www.mwrtday.com](http://www.mwrtday.com) for a listing of the tickets available and the current prices. For our retired friends in the Seal Beach area, the ITT office on the Naval Weapons Station has new hours. Monday thru Friday 9:30 to 5:00 (closed for lunch 12:30 to 1:00). Closed on Saturday and Sunday.

**Expo/RAD.** Upcoming So. Cal. retiree seminars/expos are:

The **Los Angeles AFB** will hold its annual Armed Forces Retiree Appreciation Day on **Saturday, June 2**. Events will begin at 0800 in the Gordon Conference Center, located in Building 270. For more information, call 310-653-5144

The **Marine Corps Recruit Depot** in San Diego will hold their Expo on **Saturday, 2 June** from 0830-1400 at the Post Theater. For additional information contact the MCRD RAO at 619-524-5301/5732.

The **Nellis AFB**, Las Vegas, will be holding a Retired Appreciation Day in **September**. They would love to have you attend either as a vendor or guest. This may be the excuse you have been looking for to visit Las Vegas—kill two birds with the same outing. For more information contact Jean Putney, Director, Nellis AFB, Retiree Activities Office, (702) 652-8712 or (702) 898-1888 or email her at [jeanputney@cox.net](mailto:jeanputney@cox.net).

The Navy Region SW Expo will be held on 3 **November** at the Four Points by Sheraton at 8110 Aero Drive in San Diego from 0800 to 1300.



#### How to contact us

The Retired Activities Office, Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, California is located at 800 Seal Beach Blvd in Bldg. 22, Rm 2, Seal Beach, CA 90740-5000. We are here to serve all Armed Forces retirees and are open M-Th 0900 to 1500; Fri 0900 to 1200. You may contact us at (562)-626-7152 or by emailing us at [rao-nwssb@navy.mil](mailto:rao-nwssb@navy.mil)

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[Retired Activities Website](#)