SHIFT COLORS

The Newsletter for Navy Retirees

Volume 59 Issue #1 | Navy Personnel Command | Spring 2013

Campaign Links Wounded Warriors With Federal Careers

From Civilian Human Resources Public Affairs

The Department of the Navy announced a single system wounded warriors can use to apply for Department of Defense civilian jobs.

Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Juan M. Garcia, III debuted the Defense Outplace Referral System (DORS) at the third annual Wounded Warrior Hiring and Support Conference in San Diego.

"In an effort to help connect our Wounded Warriors with available job opportunities, our commands and all three services have developed individual databases to capture the talent and skills of returning men and women--that process often required our Wounded Warriors, who were searching for jobs, to register in multiple systems," said Garcia. "Now we can direct them to one system."

DORS is a cost-effective vehicle that is compatible across all services, providing opportunities for a wide-array of skills and locations across the country, ensuring

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From the NPC Customer Service Center: Info for Reserve Retirees

The Navy Personnel Command (NPC) Customer Service Center (CSC) fields many calls from retirees. Because of the volume of calls, *Shift Colors* will be periodically publishing some information based on the topcalls they are receiving.

The NPC CSC provides information and services to active, Reserve and retired Sailors and their families around the world. The CSC is prepared to answer a variety of questions on topics such as personnel policies, pay and benefits.

The CSC can be reached by phone between 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. (Central) Monday – Friday at (866) U-ASK-NPC (827-5672), or 24 hours a day by e-mail at cscmailbox@navy.mil.

This issue's topic focuses on questions received from Reserve Retirees.

Address update. Have you moved since you retired? If so, have you updated your address with the Reserve Personnel Service Branch (PERS-912)? Many reserve retirees fail to update their address when they move which causes a

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TRICARE Prime Service Areas Changing Later This Year

From TRICARE

Beginning Oct. 1 TRICARE Prime will no longer be available to beneficiaries living in certain areas in the United States. Prime Service Areas (PSAs) are geographic areas where TRICARE Prime is offered. PSAs were created to ensure medical readiness of the active duty force by augmenting the capability and capacity of military hospitals and clinics. The affected PSAs are not close to existing military hospitals or clinics and have never augmented care around military hospitals or clinics or Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) locations.

If you live in an area affected by the PSA changes, you will be notified by mail. Your letter will include information about your remaining TRICARE health care options as well as where to get more information.

Your TRICARE Prime benefit will remain available through the end of September as long as your enrollment fees are paid, you do not disenroll early or lose eligibility.

We want to assure you that elimination of any PSAs will not change the TRICARE benefit for our active duty service members or their families currently living in these locations and enrolled in Prime. They will remain enrolled in Prime, ensuring their access to care and out-of-pocket costs do not change.

Even if TRICARE Prime is no longer available where you live, you will still be able to use the highly-rated TRICARE Standard and Extra option. TRICARE Standard and Extra is a convenient option that has no enrollment fees and offers the freedom to see any TRICARE-authorized provider for routine or specialty care.

An assigned primary care manager (PCM) is not required, and cost shares for a wide range of preventive medical services have been eliminated.

With TRICARE Extra, you choose hospitals and providers within the TRICARE network, where available, and

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Shift Colors

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Photo by Lt. Ryan de Vera

Final voyage...

Sailors, Marines and family members aboard the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CVN 65) observe the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) as the ships pass in the Atlantic Ocean. Enterprise was completing its final deployment to the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts.

Retired Acitivies Branch Loses a Member

The Navy Casualty Assistance Team is deeply saddened to announce to the Navy retiree community that we have lost one of our own. Todd A. Pike, head Navy Retired Activities Branch passed away suddenly Sept. 22, 2012, while on a temporary duty assignment in Minnetonka, Minn.

Pike was born in Grand Rapids, Mich., Sept. 24, 1958, and attended Ottawa Hills High School where he graduated during July 1976. Shortly thereafter he joined the Navy and served until his retirement as a Master Chief Navy Counselor on Aug. 1, 2006.

Pike served tours of duty aboard the USS Nimitz (CVN-68), USS Sylvania (AFS-2), USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74) and other ships and stations in a career that spanned 30 years.

Pike loved the Navy and worked tirelessly to support retirees and their families, so it was fitting that he left this life while striving to serve those whom he cared so deeply for. Pike was a humorous and caring man and his hard work impacted the lives of many retirees and survivors alike.

He is missed by those who called him shipmate and friend.

USS Enterprise Returns Home from Final Deployment

From USS Enterprise Public Affairs

More than 5,500 Sailors and Marines assigned to the Enterprise Carrier Strike Group (CSG) arrived in Norfolk, Va., Nov. 4 following a seven-and-a-half-month deployment supporting operations in the Mediterranean and the Arabian Seas.

USS Enterprise's return to Norfolk marks the 25th and final homecoming in her 51 years of distinguished service.

The aircraft carrier was inactivated Dec. 1, in a ceremony at Norfolk Naval Station, in Norfolk, Va.

"We are pleased to be returning to our families after a very successful deployment, but to know that it is the last time Enterprise will be underway through her own power makes our return very sentimental," said Capt. William C. Hamilton, Enterprise commanding officer.

While deployed, Enterprise CSG served in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility (AOR), conducting maritime security operations, theater security cooperation efforts and missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During her 238 days away from Norfolk, "Big E," as Enterprise is affectionately known, safely steamed 80,968 miles and Carrier Air Wing 1 (CVW-1) flew more than 8,000 sorties in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and exercises in the 5th and 6th Fleet AORs.

"This has not been a victory lap for Enterprise by any means," said Rear Adm. Ted Carter, Enterprise Carrier Strike Group commander. "This has been a full-on combat operation. We've seen the full spectrum of Navy operations on this deployment. It's been a business as usual kind of deployment."

For more information about USS Enterprise and her legendary history, visit www.enterprise.navy.mil.

Photo by MC2 Class Nick C. Scott

Ceremony attendees observe the inactivation ceremony of the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CVN 65), after 51 years of service.

Photo by Chief Hospital Corpsman Josh Ives

On Patrol ....

Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Baudin, foreground, assigned to Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Farah, Afghanistan, takes a break with his team members while on patrol. PRT Farah's mission is to train, advise and assist Afghan government leaders at the municipal, district and provincial levels in Farah province, Afghanistan.

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delay with correspondence being delivered from Navy Personnel Command. If you think your address may need to be updated, contact Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC.

Statement of Service. PERS-912 receives many requests for Statements of Service, also known as "points capture" each day. The Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center can provide you a "verbal" point capture over the phone. If you would like a written Statement of Service, PERS-912 can assist you with that. Contact the Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC for more information.

Reserve Retirement with Pay. Notification is forwarded approximately 6 months in advance to advise you how to submit your application for retired pay at age 60. If you do not receive notification by 4 months prior to your 60th birthday, please contact PERS-912 by calling 1-866-827-5672. You may also download the required forms off the NPC website by clicking on Retirement Pay Application Forms.

Reserve Retirement without Pay (Grey Area Reserve). Applications for retirement without pay should be submitted per the format and timeframes listed in Figure 20-4 of BUPERSINST 1001.39F. Note: Members not assigned to a drilling Reserve unit will not have "via" addresses. Their request should be submitted directly to PERS-912.

For more information about the NPC CSC, visit the NPC website at www.npc.navy.mil and click on the on the CSC link on the upper-right corner of the page.

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wounded warriors receive priority placement for jobs.

Registration is open to all services, however, in order to register in DORS, veterans must meet these qualifications: be ready to work within 30 days; be honorably discharged; and have a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more. The disability must be a direct result of injury and/or disease received in the line of duty and a result of armed conflict or instrumentality of war.

"Wounded warriors have gained a myriad of skills and experience from their military service," said Garcia. "There are hundreds of civilian occupations and careers that provide a fit for those skills - from supply sergeant to logistics specialist, corpsman to medical technician, cyber security operation to information technology manager, and many more."

Three wounded warriors are now working in civilian careers and are helping promote the program by telling their stories of transition from military to civilian service.

Matthew Sullivan, formerly in the infantry with the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, is now a records room supervisor and was the first wounded warrior hired through DORS.

"DORS offers wounded warriors a great network and advantage to getting their information out," said Sullivan.

Sullivan says there are many resources available to wounded warriors, acknowledging the angst of preparing resumes on top of leaving the service.

"There is support available to help veterans relate their military experience and skills to civilian careers," said Sullivan.

Gabe Ledesma and Laura Langdeau, both former Marines and Purple Heart recipients, have also successfully transitioned to civilian careers.

"Even though we are not on the ground, we are part of the big picture and we are supporting our Sailors and Marines," said Langdeau, now a production controller at Naval Air Systems Command's (NAVAIR) Lakehurst Division.

More than 10,857 veterans were among the new hires for the DoN this past year, with 2,580 of the new hires being disabled veterans and 1,835 being wounded warriors with 30% or more disability.

The Office of Civilian Human Resources is leading the execution of DORS for the DoN and in providing support to veterans interested in civilian careers. To explore civilian careers with the DoN and learn more about DORS and other support for veterans, visit www.donhr.navy.mil.

For more information, visit www.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy.

Treasury Mandates Electronic Pay by March 1

From Defense Finance and Accounting Service

The Department of the Treasury has announced that all payments from the federal government must be made electronically and not by paper check beginning March 1. This means most military retirees and annuitants receiving paper checks will be required to sign up for direct deposit.

With direct deposit, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) sends your payment straight to your bank account. Direct deposit gives you immediate access to your money on pay day, and it eliminates the risk of lost or stolen checks, forged signatures and identity theft.

Over 99 percent of military retirees and over 96 percent of annuitants already receive their payments through direct deposit. If you're one of the few still receiving a check in the mail, DFAS will send you a notice in the coming months. But you can get ahead of the rush by setting up direct deposit now. It's easy, it's safe and it gives you more control with less stress.

There are three ways to start direct deposit. Before you enroll, you'll need to gather information including your financial institution's routing transit number and account number. Then do one of the following:

* Send a signed Fast Start Direct Deposit Form (http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/2231.pdf) to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Retired Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London, KY 40742-7130;

* Use your myPay account to set up a direct deposit to your checking or savings account;

* Or call the DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Customer Care Center at 800-321-1080.

It can take 30 to 60 days from the day DFAS receives your enrollment for direct deposit to start. If after enrolling you receive a paper check, please cash or deposit it as you normally would. DFAS will send you a notification when they process your enrollment.

There are many advantages to eliminating paper checks. No more trips to the bank to deposit your check, no risk of lost or stolen mail, no waiting for misrouted or delayed mail, and your money is available to you the day it is due. It also will save the American taxpayers about $120 million every year.

More information is available at www.dfas.mil/mandatoryeft.html.

Photo by MCCS Joe Kane

A mass of cables and hoses on the pier provide power and water to USS Essex (LHD 2) as the ship began an 18-month maintenance period.

Want to Convert to Electronic 1099R?

You can log in to your ***myPay*** account and sign up to begin receiving your documents electronically. We will email you when your tax documents are available. There's no risk of anything getting lost in the mail and you receive your 1099R almost immediately after we post it to ***myPay***, instead of waiting for a hard copy.

If you don't have an email address registered, we've put together a quick step-by-step guide to help you add one. If you don't have a ***myPay*** account yet, you can use the troubleshooting instructions on our homepage to create one.

Log in to Your Account

1. Go to the myPay web site, and log into your account using the "log In" box at the top left-hand side of your screen

2. Click "Accept" on the Terms of Use Agreement

Register Your Email Address

1. On the Main Menu page, find the "Email Address" link

2. Enter and confirm the correct address. Be sure to select "primary" beside the email address where you want to receive pay statement notifications and other important correspondence

3. Save your changes, close out the Screen or use the link at the top of the page in the gray bar to return to the Main Menu

Sign Up for e1099R

1. Return to the Main Menu page, find the Turn on/off Hard Copy of 1099R link

2. You will be taken to a confirmation screen. Click the "Yes" button under "Do you wish to Stop home mail delivery of your 1099R?"

myPay Allows Control of Retirement Pay

From Defense Finance and Accounting Service

More than a million military retirees and annuitants are using myPay, the official online account management system for military members, retirees, annuitants and DoD employees, to stay on top of their retirement pay accounts. They use it to monitor their pay and survivor benefits, keep their contact and beneficiary information current, and control their allotments, direct deposit and tax withholdings.

According to Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) officials, over 80,000 retirees have created myPay accounts since the agency began providing a monthly electronic Retiree Account Statement, called the eRAS, last November.

Available only on myPay, the eRAS is a complete summary of your pay, deductions and benefits. It includes information about allotments, income tax withholdings, direct deposit and a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) counter that shows how much longer you have to pay premiums.

If you find something that needs to be updated while viewing your eRAS, most account changes can be made in minutes using myPay. There's no need to wait on hold for customer service or send forms in the mail. myPay is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world and changes you make using myPay take effect in just three to five business days.

According to DFAS, retirees who switch to myPay not only have hands-on control of their pay, but can receive their IRS Form 1099-R and other important documents sooner and more securely than those who rely on traditional mail delivery. When you make a change on myPay, the only hands it has to go through are yours.

On myPay you can:

* View, print or save your Retiree Account Statement
* View, print or save your Combat-Related Special Compensation Statement
* Start, stop or change electronic allotments to financial institutions
* Change your mailing or e-mail address
* Make changes to your direct deposit information
* View, print or save your IRS Form 1099R
* Subscribe to the Retiree Newsletter
* And more

How to Create a myPay Account

If you've never used myPay, visit https://mypay.dfas.mil and click "Forgot or Need a Password" to have a temporary password mailed to you. When you receive your password, return to the myPay home page and click "Create an Account" to get started. If you have trouble creating your account, visit www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary for step-by-step instructions.

Resetting myPay Passwords Gets Easier

From Defense Finance and Accounting Service

In December 2012, Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) customers began to be able to reset their myPay passwords online by answering a few security questions. myPay is the DFAS online pay account management system available to all military members, military retirees and many federal civilian employees.

Before this convenient new feature, myPay users received new passwords by email or mail, which could be a big problem for those transitioning to new jobs or locations as their contact information often changed.

"We looked at a number of options to make resetting forgotten passwords easier and more convenient for our customers," said David McDermott, DFAS deputy director of operations. "The security questions are widely used throughout the banking and retail industries to verify user identities. They are the best option we found to improve service to our myPay account holders, while still protecting the privacy of their online information."

After logging in to their accounts in, users will be given a list of 17 possible security questions to answer. myPay users need to answer eight of those 17 questions to set up their online password reset capability.

Later when they forget their passwords, myPay will ask users to answer three randomly selected questions from those they have provided answers to.

The security questions are optional for now. In the Spring of 2013, however, all myPay users, including those who use Army Knowledge Online (AKO), AF Portal and smart cards, will be required to answer eight security questions.

This change is part of a series of enhancements myPay has made based on customer feedback.

New Fast Forms Have Arrived

Automated versions of the DFAS 2558 Authorization to Start or Stop an Allotment and the DFAS 2866 Retiree Change of Address/State Tax Withholding Request are now available.

Fast Forms are automated. DFAS receives your form instantly and complete the change within three to seven business days. They also save you paper and postage costs!

To change an existing allotment with this method, submit a stop authorization on one day, and then a new start authorization the next day. This will ensure that your requests are processed in the proper order.

VA Completes More Than 1 Million Compensation Claims

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), which oversees the delivery of disability compensation and other benefits to the nation's Veterans, processed over one million disability claims during fiscal year 2012, marking the third year in row VBA claims processors have exceeded the one million mark.

"We have made great strides, but we realize much work remains to be done to better serve Veterans," said Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "Too many Veterans still wait too long. That's unacceptable, and that is why VA has begun implementing a paperless, digital disability claims system– a lasting solution that will transform how we operate and eliminate the claims backlog."

In August, VA had its most productive claims processing period in its history, completing a record 107,462 claims and surpassing the previous monthly record of 103,296 set in 2010. This high level of production is accompanied by an increase in the overall accuracy of rating decisions, which has risen from 83 to 86 percent since September 2011, as determined by VA's national quality assurance program.

While claims production is at historic highs, incoming claims have increased nearly 50 percent since 2008, outpacing VA's claims processing capacity.

"Our employees are working very hard to sustain this level of production," said Hickey. "This is a testament to their dedication to meeting the increasing needs of our Veterans."

VA's goal is to process all disability claims within 125 days, at a 98 percent accuracy level, and eliminate the claims backlog in 2015.

This year, VBA is beginning a nationwide organizational transformation to increase its claims decision output by retooling procedures and deploying paperless data systems that will speed claims processing and improve quality. All 56 VBA regional offices will be operating under the new organizational model by the end of 2013.

Online Toolkit Aims to Support Mental Health Providers

The Department of Veterans Affairs has developed a new online Community Provider Toolkit (www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders) aimed at delivering support, therapeutic tools, and resources to community providers treating Veterans for mental health concerns.

"Many Veterans seek mental health care at VA, yet many also choose to go to providers in their community," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "VA is committed to helping Veterans wherever they may seek care. This toolkit will enable those community providers who treat Veterans to better understand the specific issues Veterans face and help them access VA resources."

The goal of the Community Provider Toolkit is to further enhance the delivery of mental health services to Veterans through increased communication and coordination of care between community providers and VA. It not only provides information about accessing, communicating with, and, if needed, making referrals to VA, but also provides effective tools to assist Veterans who are dealing with a variety of mental health challenges. The Community Provider Toolkit also includes sections intended to increase providers' knowledge about military culture.

On Aug. 31, President Obama issued his historic Executive Order to improve mental health services for Veterans, Servicemembers and military families. As directed in the Executive Order, VA is hiring 1,600 new mental health professionals and 300 support staff. The Executive Order also directed a 50 percent increase in the staff of the Veterans Crisis line.

Last year, VA provided quality, specialty mental health services to 1.3 million Veterans. Since 2009, VA has increased the mental health care budget by 39 percent. Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of Veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

Photo by Shoshona Pilip-Florea

Vice Adm. Matt L. Nathan, the Navy surgeon general and chief for the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, presents his command coin to 10-year-old Barbara Webb, the daughter of a Marine suffering with PTSD.

VA provides a comprehensive continuum of effective treatments and conducts extensive research on the assessment and treatment of PTSD and other mental health problems. Those interested in further information can go to www.mentalhealth.va.gov or www.ptsd.va.gov to find educational materials including courses for providers in mental health treatment. They can also learn more about the award-winning VA/DoD PTSD Coach Mobile App, which provides education, resources, and symptom monitoring and management strategies.

VA Offers a New Tool to Help Veterans Prevent Diabetes

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced the implementation of a pilot version of the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a program being promoted nationally by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, aimed at reducing the number of Veterans who develop diabetes.

"The Diabetes Prevention Program will provide Veterans with another tool to help them lead healthier, fuller lives, reducing their risk for diabetes," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The DPP was a major multi-center clinical research study aimed at discovering whether modest weight loss through dietary change and increased physical activity or treatment with the oral diabetes drug metformin could prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes.

The study enrolled participants who were prediabetic— overweight and with blood glucose (blood sugar) levels higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. Results showed those who lost a modest amount of weight through dietary changes and increased physical activity sharply reduced their chances of developing diabetes.

"Approximately 24 percent of Veterans have Type 2 diabetes," said Dr. Linda Kinsinger, VA's chief consultant for preventive medicine. "We've monitored the DPP's results and we feel that it could be another tool to make a difference for Veterans."

Through VA's pilot DPP, which will be offered on a strictly voluntary basis, some Veterans who are at risk for, but not diagnosed with, diabetes will attend a series of group sessions and will be given predetermined weight loss and physical activity goals. Research has shown that, while many Veterans benefit by establishing their own health goals, others show positive improvement working towards goals determined by the program.

Other Veterans at risk for diabetes will receive weight management care through MOVE! - VA's current weight management program. The program targets a broad range of patients who are obese or overweight with obesity-related conditions, whereas the DPP specifically targets those obese individuals who have laboratory evidence of prediabetes.

Because VA is eager to try new approaches to promoting health and preventing disease, it is implementing a pilot VA version of the DPP. A limited number of Veterans with prediabetes will be able to participate in this pilot clinical program at the medical centers in Minneapolis, Baltimore, and Greater Los Angeles with VA Ann Arbor serving as the coordinating center.

For more information on this program, contact Jay Shiffler (jay.shiffler@va.gov) at the VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. To learn more about the VA's prevention program, visit http://www.prevention.va.gov/index.asp.

VA Leads Nation in Breast Cancer Screening Rates

The Department of Veterans Affairs leads the Nation in breast cancer screening rates and has outperformed non-VA health care systems in breast cancer screenings for more than 15 years, with 87 percent of eligible women receiving mammograms in the VA health care system in fiscal year 2010.

In comparison, in 2010, the private sector screened 71 percent of eligible women, Medicare screened 69 percent and Medicaid screened 51 percent, according to Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set, a tool used by more than 90 percent of U.S. health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service.

"We're proud of our great record on breast cancer screenings and treatments," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We'll continue to work to improve access and coordination of care for women Veterans."

Since 2000, the number of female Veterans using VA health care has more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 to more than 337,000 in fiscal year 2011. As the number of women Veterans increases rapidly, VA not only focuses on improving access to breast screenings and coordination of care, but also trains providers in the latest breast exam techniques.

VA provides mammograms for all Veterans, with 45 facilities providing services on-site utilizing digital mammography. Some facilities offer mammograms to walk-in patients and same-day ultrasounds.VA also offers mobile mammography in some areas of the country. This mammogram technology-on-wheels allows women Veterans in rural areas to get screening mammograms and have their mammograms read by a VA breast radiologist, without traveling far from home. All this improves access for more than 337,000 women VA health care users.

"VA is different from other health care systems in that we serve a female population that is spread across the continental United States, located in both rural and urban areas," said Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant for VA's Women's Health Services. "Because of that we have to be creative and innovative about the way we provide screenings, track a woman's mammogram results and breast cancer care, and train our providers in the latest diagnostic techniques and breast cancer treatments."

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, visit: www.va.gov/womenvet and www.womenshealth.va.gov.

New Copays for TRICARE Pharmacy Customers

New copayments for prescription drugs covered by TRICARE will go into effect soon. The Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act requires TRICARE to increase copays on brand name and non-formulary medications that are not filled at military clinics or hospitals. There is no increase to copays for generic medications. Increases will be effective sometime in February, depending on when system changes can be made, and the publication of a required Federal Notice.

TRICARE Pharmacy copays vary based on the class of drug and where beneficiaries choose to fill their prescriptions. The copay for generic medications stays at $5 when a prescription is filled at a network pharmacy. There is no co-pay when generic prescriptions are filled through TRICARE Home Delivery. The new copay for a 30-day supply of a brand name medication purchased at a retail network pharmacy will be $17, up from the current $12. Beneficiaries using TRICARE Home Delivery will pay $13 for brand name drugs, up from $9. However, the Home Delivery price is for a 90-day supply.

The greatest change in copays applies to non-formulary medications. The $25 copay for these drugs increases to $44 at retail pharmacies and $43 through Home Delivery. The TRICARE Uniform Formulary is a list of all the medications TRICARE covers.

For fiscal 2014 and beyond, the new law directs that copays increase annually by the same percentage as retiree cost-of-living adjustments. In years when a COLA increase would total less than a dollar, it will be delayed a year and combined with the next adjustment so increases will always be $1 or more.

Pharmacies at military hospitals and clinics will continue to provide medications with no copays. Visit www.TRICARE.mil/costs for more details.

Add App to Access TRICARE Pharmacy Benefits

TRICARE beneficiaries have new pharmacy options available and accessible in the palm of their hand just by using TRICARE pharmacy contractor Express Script's enhanced mobile application. The new additions let beneficiaries use their smartphone to safely and securely manage their TRICARE pharmacy benefit.

So how convenient are the latest enhancements?

The updated app includes medication reminders and an account registration tool. The reminder feature gives beneficiaries the option to set up daily alerts to make sure they take their medications as prescribed and don't skip a dose. The account registration feature lets beneficiaries create their ESI account right on their smart phone.

"The Express Rx mobile app gives beneficiaries access to their prescription information anytime, anywhere," said Rear Adm. Thomas J. McGinnis, chief of TRICARE Pharmacy Operations.

Currently, the Express Rx app and mobile-optimized website allow beneficiaries to register for TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery and change current prescriptions over to home delivery. They can also order home delivery refills and check order status. Another feature lets beneficiaries look up information on their current prescriptions. For GPS-enabled smart phones, the app can direct beneficiaries to the nearest network retail pharmacy.

Smartphone users can download the app for free by going to www.express-scripts.com/mobile or using services like the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace. The mobile-optimized pharmacy website is accessible at http://m.esrx.com.

Other available free apps to download through the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace are the TriWest mobile app and the Defense Manpower Data Center's milConnect mobile app. Beneficiaries in the South Region can make use of the mobile Humana Military website, https://m.humana-military.com/ while beneficiaries in the North Region can use the mobile Health Net mobile site, https://m.healthnet.com.

For more information about TRICARE pharmacy program, visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacy. Learn how to switch to TRICARE pharmacy home delivery at www.tricare.mil/homedelivery.

TRICARE Marks 'Over One Million Served'

The TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Vaccination Program celebrated the fall flu season with an ounce of prevention – serving up its one millionth vaccine on Oct. 28, 2012.

TRICARE expanded its pharmacy coverage in August 2011 to include a full spectrum of preventive vaccines. Before, administration of most vaccines to beneficiaries was limited to physicians' offices and military treatment facilities.

"The response has been phenomenal and we are excited to hit this milestone," said Rear Adm. Thomas McGinnis, chief of TRICARE Pharmacy Operations. "Vaccines are available at participating TRICARE network pharmacies at no cost ... there is really no excuse not to get vaccinated."

Vaccines are among the most cost-effective way to prevent disease. TRICARE covers all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-recommended vaccinations at no cost if they're administered by a pharmacist at a participating TRICARE pharmacy.

TRICARE Launches Philippine Demonstration

TRICARE launched a demonstration project Jan. 1 in designated areas of the Philippines to provide beneficiaries access to high-quality health care from approved demonstration providers. TRICARE Standard beneficiaries who live in the Philippines and receive care in the designated demonstration areas may participate.

All beneficiaries who live in the Philippines and who've filed a claim in the last two years will be notified by letter at least 60 days prior to the start of health care delivery under the Philippine Demonstration. To have TRICARE cost share on their claims, beneficiaries getting care in demonstration areas must see an approved provider. If they elect not to participate in the demonstration by seeing a provider not on the approved provider list when they receive care in designated demonstration areas, TRICARE will not cost share on their claim.

One of the main benefits of the TRICARE Philippine Demonstration is approved providers will file claims on behalf of the beneficiary. The beneficiary then receives an explanation of benefits (EOB), which informs them of their patient liability, appropriate cost shares and deductibles.

Beneficiaries who live in the Philippines and want to participate in the demonstration must provide their physical address to the approved provider to submit claims on their behalf. Post office boxes and retirement activity office boxes are not acceptable.

TRICARE is committed to providing high-quality care to eligible TRICARE Standard beneficiaries residing in the Philippines while effectively managing health care costs. Beneficiaries looking for more information on the Philippine Demonstration can visit www.tricare.mil/Philippines or www.tricare-overseas.com/Beneficiary_PhilippineDemonstration_home.htm. The approved provider list will be posted on the TRICARE Overseas Program contractor's website at least 60 days prior to the start date of the demonstration, www.tricare-overseas.com.

TRICARE Requires Proof of Payment for Overseas Claims

TRICARE beneficiaries must now send proof of payment with all overseas medical claims, including claims for care received when traveling overseas. Overseas Active Duty Dental Program claims also require proof of payment if the service member pays a provider directly.

Beneficiaries who pay an overseas provider directly should indicate this and the amount paid at the top of the medical claim form to ensure the claim is processed quickly and correctly. Claim forms can be downloaded at www.tricare.mil/forms.

When the claim amount is less than $1,000, beneficiaries can submit a copy of the provider or a pharmacy invoice or bill, if it clearly identifies the amount paid. If not, a copy of the cancelled check, credit card receipt or electronic funds transfer must be submitted as proof. Medical or pharmacy bills for more than $1,000 always require a copy of the cancelled check, credit card receipt or electronic funds transfer as proof of payment in addition to the provider invoice or bill.

If the provider was paid with cash, beneficiaries may be required to show proof of the cash withdrawal from a financial institution. In some cases, the TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) claims processor may require additional supporting documentation to process the claim.

When TRICARE is the second-payer on a claim, it should include the diagnosis describing why the medical care was needed and an explanation of benefits from the other health insurance provider.

Beneficiaries bundling more than one claim on a single form must submit a proof of payment for each service. Every claim on the form will be reviewed as if it was submitted separately and any items that do not have proof of payment will be returned for additional documentation.

Overseas claims for TRICARE Dental Program and TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (non active duty dental programs) do not require proof of payment. Medicare-eligible TRICARE beneficiaries who get care from a Medicare provider in U.S. Territories are also not affected by this change.

For questions about this policy, contact the appropriate overseas regional call center and select option 2 for claims. For contact information, visit www.tricare.mil/contacts. For more information about proof-of-payment requirements, visit www.tricare.mil/proofofpayment.

Photo by MCSN Michelle N. Rasmusson

Fighting fire..

Sailors from the aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) extinguish a fire during general shipboard firefighting training at Firefighting School in Yokosuka, Japan.

NEXCOM Changes Its NEX Price Match Policy

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) has revised its Price Match Policy for its NEXs around the world. The NEX Price Match Policy guarantees that NEXs will match any brick and mortar retailer's advertised price within the local market area on any identical in-stock item.

"We want the NEX to be our customers' choice for shopping," said Richard Dow, NEXCOM Senior Vice President, Store Operations. "Revamping our NEX Price Match Policy gives our NEX cashiers more authority to match prices which will give an even greater customer service experience to our customers."

NEX sales associates have the authority to match an advertised price reduction up to $100. An NEX supervisor must authorize a price match over $100. Customers may ask for a price adjustment at any cash register in the store.

The advertised priced may be presented in the form of a printed ad or a mobile marketing device, such as a cell phone or smart phone, from a local competitor. Photographs of an item taken with a cell phone or smart phone will not be accepted.

A NEX cashier will also accept a customer's verbal price challenge for an item with a price difference of $10 or less. Customers need not bring a copy of a competitor's advertisement for items under $10.

For items on the NEX web store, myNavyExchange.com, the NEX will visually verify the price of the item prior to matching the price.

In addition, overseas NEXs will match the pricing of current mail order catalogs as well as web stores from Sears, J.C. Penney, Walmart and any other comparable commercial retailers with web stores. Freight charges, if applicable, are added to the competitor's price.

The NEX Price Match Policy does not apply to fine jewelry, automotive parts, automotive labor and service, gasoline and special orders. Double and triple coupons, clearance, percent and dollar off items, flea market sales, going out of business sales and commissary prices are also excluded from the NEX Price Match Policy.

For more information on the NEX Price Match Policy, see your local NEX manager or https://www.mynavyexchange.com/command/customer_service/p_policy.html.

Select NEXs to Offer Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) is piloting a program to offer electric vehicle charging stations at several of its NEXs.

"We are piloting this program to meet the needs of our customers who own electric vehicles," said Robert J. Bianchi, Chief Executive Officer, NEXCOM. NEX Bethesda, Md., is the first store to offer electric vehicle charging. Adjacent to the new NEX is a 2-level 500-space parking garage that features two electric vehicle charging spots reserved specifically for eco-friendly, low emissions vehicles.

"Our customers are definitely using the electric vehicle charger," said Rico J. Macaraeg, head of Employee Development and Marketing, NEX Northern District. "We have one customer who comes in during his lunch hour to charge his car. While the car is charging, he grabs lunch in our food court and does some shopping."

The cost for charging an electric vehicle in Bethesda is $.48 per kilowatt hour. Customers pay for the service at the charging station by either using radio frequency identification (RFID) credit or a key fob card, which acts as a debit card. The card can be purchased at www.chargepoint.com.

"The price to charge a vehicle may differ from one NEX location to another," said Larry Boone, NEXCOM's automotive program manager.

NEXCOM plans to provide electric vehicle charging stations at NEX San Diego and NEX North Island, Calif., this year and NEX Annapolis, Md., in 2014 when its new store is scheduled to open.

NEXCOM Improves Its Customer Return Policy

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) is making improvements to its return policy. Merchandise purchased at a NEX or from myNavyExchange.com can be returned to any NEX store within 45 days of purchase for a refund or even exchange.

"We made this improvement to our return policy make it more convenient for our customers," said Richard Dow, NEXCOM's senior vice president store pperations. ."

The standardized 45 day return policy on merchandise eliminates the previous exclusions including the 14 day return policy on certain items, such as computers, software and digital cameras. Now, the only exception to the 45 day NEX Customer Return Policy are pre-paid cards, such as financial, music, phone and gift cards, which are not returnable.

The refund will be processed in the same payment form as the original purchase. A return without a receipt will be issued on an NEX Gift Card at the item's current NEX price. Refunds made without a receipt can only be made at the NEX's Customer Service desk.

DOD Official Lauds Veterans Commercial License Effort

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

Maryland has joined 33 other states in agreeing to waive the skills test for veterans and service members who have military training that would entitle them to a commercial driver's license, a senior Defense Department official said today.

Frank C. DiGiovanni, director of training, readiness and strategy in the office of the deputy assistant secretary of defense for readiness, joined Maryland Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown and officials from the Maryland Department of Transportation, veterans' organizations, and federal, state and local offices to announce two new services available to veterans through the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, or MVA.

"This initiative is extremely important for the Department of Defense," DiGiovanni said. "It sets a great benchmark and will greatly assist our veterans as they plan for their future."

Along with the departments of Labor, Transportation and Veterans Affairs, DOD is working with national credentialing agencies, states and other stakeholders to address the complex challenges of certification and licensure for veterans.

DOD's Credentialing and Licensing Task Force was established to help service members in high-demand fields gain industry-recognized, nationally portable credentials to increase their competitiveness in the private sector after separation from the military.

Most states require drivers to demonstrate their skills before issuing a commercial driver's license. Now, 34 states will waive the skills test, but not the written test, for eligible veterans and service members.

More states are considering such a waiver, according to a DOD spokeswoman.

A provision of the commercial learner's permit rule gives state driver licensing agencies the authority to substitute two years of commercial motor vehicle safe-driving experience in the military equivalents of commercial motor vehicles for the skills-test portion of the commercial driver license.

The rule applies to active duty, Reserve, Guard and Coast Guard members, and veterans within 90 days of separation.

Starting this month, Maryland's MVA is offering a veteran indicator on driver's licenses and identification cards to help veterans identify themselves to access services and resources and is implementing a streamlined process for veterans to obtain commercial driver's licenses as allowed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

DiGiovanni said that in fiscal 2011, more than 63,000 service members had occupations whose skills involved driving trucks -- 28,247 on active duty and 35,080 in the Guard or Reserve.

"There are also tens of thousands of service members who are truck drivers as an additional duty," DiGiovanni said, "so this particular authorization is extremely important to the employability" of service members as they depart from the service."

Military truck drivers bring outstanding experience and training to the commercial trucking sector, he added.

"I had an opportunity to speak to a veterans group, and I asked them what [they] learned during their service to the military that would be useful in the private sector," DiGiovanni recalled.

The first thing they cite is leadership, he added, and then working as a team and making decisions in a very complex environment.

"So I think it's really important what these veterans bring to the table, particularly the commercial trucking sector," he said.

DiGiovanni closed his remarks by challenging the state of Maryland and veterans service organizations to continue to find ways to support our veterans.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Michael Achterling

On approach...

A landing craft air cushion (LCAC) approaches the stern gate of the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6), joining it on a scheduled deployment. The Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group is on deployment in the U. S. 7th Fleet area of operations and will take part in amphibious integration training (AIT), and certification exercise (CERTEX) and will participate in the annual multi-national combined joint training exercise Cobra Gold.

DOD Funds Study of Omega 3 Benefit in Reducing Suicides

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department is funding a new study to determine if something as simple as drinking smoothies with high concentrations of the fatty acids found in fish oils can help to reduce suicides among veterans.

The study will assess the effect of Omega 3 fatty acids on 350 volunteer participants who have attempted suicide or are considered to be at risk of doing so, said Bernadette Marriott, a Medical University of South Carolina professor who is the study's principal investigator.

The university is collaborating in the clinical trial with researchers from the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, S.C., and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, part of the National Institutes of Health. Ron Acierno, director of the post-traumatic stress disorder clinic at the Charleston VA center, will partner with Marriott as an onsite collaborator.

The Military Operational Medicine Joint Program Committee is funding the study, and the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command's Congressional Directed Medical Research Programs Office will manage it.

The test subjects, to be recruited over the next three years from the Charleston VA center and the local veteran population, will drink two child-size juice boxes of commercially available, smoothie-type drinks each day for six months, Marriott said.

Half the veterans will receive about 4 grams of Omega 3 fatty acids in their drinks each day, said Joseph Hibbeln, acting chief of NIAA's nutritional neurosciences section. This should elevate the concentration of Omega 3s in the group's blood to levels commonly found among populations of fish-eating countries such as Japan and Iceland.

The other half of the test subjects, the control group, will receive placebos.

Both groups will continue to receive the same mental health care services as before the study.

Meanwhile, researchers will evaluate them as they begin the study and periodically over its course to assess their depression and anxiety levels and performance on cognitive tests, Marriott said. They also will take blood samples to measure Omega 3 levels.

The investigators will have no idea until after the study which test subjects received Omega 3 doses and which were in the control, Marriott said.

Based on previous studies in both animals and humans, Marriott said she expects to see much higher Omega 3 levels in the experimental group, with corresponding improvements in their mood and performance levels.

Hibbeln has been a pioneer in linking Omega 3 deficiencies with depression and violent or impulsive disorders. For the past 20 years, he has advanced the theory that the brain, made up of fats and oils, depends on Omega 3 nutrients to operate properly and fully experience pleasure.

He uses the analogy of a tree that grows deep roots, a sturdy trunk and abundance of leaves only if it's properly fertilized and gets the nutrients it needs.

The problem, he explained, is that the human body gets Omega 3s only through food and nutritional supplements. And the typical American diet is low in Omega 3 fatty acids -- with military populations consuming even fewer.

Exacerbating the problem, Hibbeln said, is that their diets tend to be high in Omega 6s, the oils commonly found in French fries, chips and other processed foods. Within red blood cells, Omega 6s are like "insurgents" who crowd out the few good-guy Omega 3s, he explained.

That double-whammy, he said, puts people at increased risk of suicide and other emotional distress.

Assessing the blood of 800 active-duty military members who committed suicide between 2002 and 2008, Hibbeln said all had "profoundly low levels of Omega 3 fatty acids, by evolutionary and world standards."

The suicide victims had particularly low levels of docosahexaenoic acid or DHA, an Omega 3 fatty acid concentrated in the brain. The levels were so low that, based on other studies, it could have elevated the service members' risk of suicide by 75 percent, Hibbeln said.

But equally troubling was that the control group in that study, which consisted of 800 active-duty service members, had similarly low levels of Omega 3s in their blood.

Hibbeln recalled another era in military history when a nutritional deficiency caused an operational challenge. Only when the British navy began feeding lemons and limes -- a great source of Vitamin C -- to its sailors did they stop suffering from debilitating cases of scurvy.

Recognizing the potential benefits of Omega 3s, the Army Natick Soldier Systems Center in Massachusetts, has started infusing them into combat rations. Natick food scientists already have started introducing them into lemon poppy seed cake and a salmon in alfredo sauce entree.

Hibbeln said he's hoping the new study will show results like those in another he conducted that involved 49 patients who were admitted to an emergency room in Ireland for multiple episodes of "self harm." In that study, all the patients were sent home from the hospital without psychotherapy services, but half received 2 grams of Omega 3 fatty acids to take each day.

The findings could have far-reaching impact beyond the military, Marriott said, noting that suicide is the 10th largest cause of death in the United States.

"This study will have important ramifications, not just for veterans, but for all Americans," she said.

pay a lower cost share.

Why the Change?

The Department of Defense (DoD) has planned to make PSA reductions since 2007, when proposals were requested for the next generation of TRICARE contracts (known as T-3). Bidders for the three U.S. regional contracts were only required to establish PSAs around military hospitals or clinics and in areas that lost military hospitals or clinics due to BRAC decisions.

Although PSA reductions under T-3 were intended to take place simultaneously, contract delays in all three U.S. regions resulted in a staggered transition. DoD senior leadership determined that existing PSAs be kept in place until all regions could fully transition to T-3.

The North Region transitioned in April 2011 and the South Region followed in April 2012. The West Region will be the final region to transition under a new contractor on April 1, 2013.

In recognition of the need for beneficiaries to plan for critical health care decisions, PSAs will be continued in all regions until October 1, 2013, to coincide with the deadline for annual TRICARE Prime enrollments and fee adjustments.

What areas are affected?

TRICARE will soon offer a ZIP code lookup tool that will help you find out if you live in an area that is affected. Sign up now to receive e-mail alerts about this topic and to learn when the ZIP code lookup tool becomes available.

What does the Change Mean to Me?

Retirees and Dependents

Retirees and their family members enrolled in TRICARE Prime in the affected PSAs may be able to reenroll in TRICARE Prime at a military hospital or clinic or with a primary care manager in a remaining PSA. They must fill out a new TRICARE Prime Enrollment, Disenrollment, and Primary Care Manager (PCM) Change Form (DD Form 2876) and sign Section V waiving their drive-time standards. Beneficiaries should be aware that waiving drive-time standards may require them to drive long distances for primary and specialty care.

Those who do not reenroll in TRICARE Prime can use TRICARE Standard and Extra, which is consistently rated highly in beneficiary surveys. TRICARE Standard is the basic entitlement by law.

Survivors

If you are a surviving spouse of a deceased active duty service member, how your coverage may change depends on your survivor status.

If you are a "transitional survivor" (first three years following sponsor's death) then you will remain in TRICARE Prime as long as you continue to live in the same location and remain eligible for TRICARE. If you move, you may need to transfer your coverage to another Prime option or use the highly-rated TRICARE Standard and Extra health plan option.

After three years, you are no longer considered a transitional survivor and your current TRICARE Prime enrollment will end, but you may be able to reenroll in TRICARE Prime at a military hospital or clinic or with a network primary care manager in a remaining PSA by waiving your TRICARE Prime access standards. To see if you can:

Fill out a new TRICARE Prime Enrollment, Disenrollment, and Primary Care Manager (PCM) Change Form (DD Form 2876)

Sign Section V waiving your drive-time standards. Please note that waiving your drive-time standards may require you to drive long distances for primary and specialty care.

If you do not reenroll in TRICARE Prime, you can use the highly-rated TRICARE Standard and Extra health plan option. You may also enroll in the US Family Health Plan if it's offered where you live.

Surviving children are always considered "transitional survivors." They are treated like active duty family members and can remain enrolled in TRICARE Prime (as long as they continue to live in the same location) until they otherwise lose eligibility for TRICARE.

The coverage for surviving spouses and children together with their differences can be difficult to understand. Please contact your regional contractor or a Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator for help understanding how these changes will affect you.

Beneficiaries Enrolled in the TRICARE Young Adult (TYA)-Prime Option

Young adults whose sponsors are active duty service members will not be affected. Other young adults with TYA Prime in the affected PSAs may be able to waive their drive-time standards and fill out a new TRICARE Young Adult Application (DD Form 2947) to reenroll in TYA Prime at an military hospitals or clinics or with a primary care manager in a remaining PSA.

Those who do not reenroll in TYA Prime can purchase coverage under TYA Standard, which is $152 monthly, compared with $176 for TYA Prime.

Affected beneficiaries may also have the option to enroll in the US Family Health Plan, a TRICARE Prime managed care option available through networks of not-for-profit health care systems in six areas of the United States.

Beneficiaries Using Other Plans

Those who already use TRICARE for Life, TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, or TRICARE Standard and Extra will not be affected.

Retiree checklist: What survivors should know

Shift Colors periodically provides a checklist for retirees and their family members. This checklist is designed to provide retirees and their loved ones with some help in preparing for the future. The checklist is not all-inclusive and should be used with other estate planning tools.

1. Create a military file.
__ Retirement orders
__ DD 214
__ Separation papers
__ Medical records

2. Create a military retired pay file.
__ Claim number of any pending VA claims
__ Address of the VA office being used
__ List of current deductions from benefits
__ Name, relationship and address of beneficiary of unpaid retired pay at the time of death
__ Address and phone number for DFAS:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U S Military Retirement Pay
Post Office Box 7130
London, KY 40742 7130
(800) 321-1080 option #3 (for deceased members)

3. Create an annuities file, to include:
__ Information about the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)
(Additional information regarding SBP annuity claims can be obtained from the DFAS-Cleveland Center office at 1-800-321-1080.)
__ Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP)
__ Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (RSFPP)
__ Civil Service annuity

4. Create a personal document file.
__ Marriage Records
__ Divorce decree
__ Adoptions and naturalization papers

5. Create an income tax file.
__ Copies of state and federal income tax returns

6. Create a property tax file.
__ Copies of tax bills
__ Deeds and any other related information.

7. Create an insurance policy file.
__ Life Insurance
__ Property, accident, liability insurance
__ Hospitalization/Medical Insurance

8. Maintain a listing of banking and credit information, in a secure location.
__ Bank account numbers
__ Location of all deposit boxes
__ Savings bond information
__ Stocks, bonds and any securities owned
__ Credit card account numbers and mailing addresses

9. Maintain a membership listing of all associations and organizations.
__ Organization names and phone numbers
__ Membership fee information

10. Maintain a list of all friends and business associates.
__ Include names, addresses and phone numbers

11. Hold discussions with your next of kin about your wishes for burial and funeral services. At a minimum the discussion should include cemetery location and type of burial (ground, cremation or burial at sea). This knowledge may assist your next of kin to carry out all of your desires.

12. You could also pre-arrange your funeral services via your local funeral home. Many states will allow you to pre-pay for services.

13. Investigate the decisions that you and your family have agreed upon. Many states have specific laws and guidelines regulating cremation and burials at sea. Some states require a letter of authority signed by the deceased in order to authorize a cremation. Know the laws in your specific area and how they may affect your decisions. Information regarding Burials at Sea can be obtained by phoning Navy Mortuary Affairs at (866) 787-0081.

14. Once your decisions have been made and you are comfortable with them, have a will drawn up outlining specifics.

15. Ensure that your will and all other sensitive documents are maintained in a secure location known by your loved ones.

Organizations to be notified in the event of a retiree death:

1. Defense Finance and Accounting Service, London, KY
   (800) 321-1080
2. Social Security Administration (for death benefits)
   (800) 772-1213
3. Department of Veterans Affairs (if applicable)
   (800) 827-1000
4. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
   (724) 794-8690
5. Any fraternal group that you have membership with: e.g., MOAA, FRA, NCOA, VFW, AL, TREA
6. Any previous employers that provide pension or benefits.

Feedback

Our office is always looking to improve on how information is provided to the retired Navy community. Please snd suggestions to MILL_RetiredActivities@navy.mil or:

Department of the Navy
OPNAV N135F
Retired Activities Branch
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055-6220

Reunions

Check the Shift Colors Web page (http://www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Publications/ShiftColors/) **for a full listing of Reunions**

REUNION 2013	DATE	PHONE #	E-mail/Web address
2nd BN 4th Marines Association	June 26-29	(703) 866-7657 (856) 728-3191	24reunion2013chairman@gmail.com www.2-4association.org
East Coast All Seabee Reunion	Feb. 22-24	(804) 921-4753	seabeemacd40@verizon.net
Mine Division 113 Vietnam	Sept. 19-22	(501) 620-0593	don9329@hotmail.com
NAAS New Iberia, LA	Oct. 11-13		navynil50@yahoo.com
NAS Chase Field	April 11-13	(562) 338-5088	www.naschasefield.com mwebb@naschasefield.com
NAS Whidbey Island SAR (all years)	Sept. 6-8	(260) 241-3164	naswhidbeysarreunion@gmail.com
Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association	May 25-29	(865) 300-7553	savanna2013@usncva.org www.usncva.org
Naval Training Center Bainbridge	Oct. 3-6	(540) 345-5826	DE585@cox.net www.usntcb.org
Navy Competitive Shooters Reunion	Sept. 4-7	(865) 300-7553	davefiehtner@gmail.com
Navy Hydrofoil Reunion, PHMRON 2, PHMs 1-6, and PHM-RON 2 MLSG	Sept. 20-23		reunion.navy.hydrofoilers@foils.org www.foils.org/reunion.html
Navy VB-109/VPB-109 Bombing Squadron reunion	Oct. 3-6	(814) 866-6683	
NMCB 24 / NCFSU 3	Oct. 5	(352) 473-2850 (803) 222-5338	pete.queen@yahoo.com
NMCB-20 Seabees	Feb. 22-24		seabee@bardstowncable.net
Patrol Boat River Veterans Association	Sept. 12-15	(951) 734-5871	Rfichtelman@sbcglobal.net
Southeast Regional Submarine Convention	April 7-11	(843) 761-7134	thombeach@yahoo.com
USS ABNAKI (ATF 96)	Sept. 25-29	(803) 628-8110	asamyers@carolina.rr.com
USS AGERHOLM (DD 826)	Sept. 26-29	(518) 373-8363	hr@msn.com ussagerholm.org
USS ARLINGTON (AGMR 2)	April 3-9	(863) 307-3187	
USS BORDELON (DD/DDR 881)	Sept. 4-8	(414) 852-2103	sriccobono@sbcglobal.net
USS BREMERTON (CA 130/SSN 698)	Sept. 8-12	(406) 837-4474 (585) 365-2316	jmbluff1@centurytel.net rpolanowski@stny.rr.com
USS CARPENTER (DD 825)	April 25-29	(303) 627-1527	coyritchie@aol.com
USS CLAUDE V RICKETTS (DDG 5)	July 25-29, 2014	(603) 986-4661	www.thebignickel.org RickettsDDG5@yahoo.com
USS CONY (DD/DDE 508)	May 15-19	(863) 307-3187	
USS DONNER (LSD 20)	May 2-5	(610) 775-7539	dheimb@1usa.com
USS DULUTH (LPD 6)	Sept. 19-22	(440) 951-6695	don.rowe@sbcglobal.net https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/ussduluth
USS FOX (DLG/CG 33)	Sept. 26-29	(843) 569-0981	habibphil@comcast.net www.ussfox.org
USS FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT (CVB/CVA/CV 42), USS MIDWAY (CVB/CVA/CV 41)	Aug. 20-25	(859) 687-7001	http://squadrons-shipmates-of-the-fdr-midway.com/
USS GALVESTON (CLG 3)	Sept. 11-15	(866) 398-2655	galveston@comcast.net
USS GRAFFIAS (AF 29)	Sept. 10-14	(540) 442-0007	john_w_morrow@yahoo.com
USS HANSON (DD/DDR 832)	Sept. 19-22	(770) 504-0004 (770) 584-5023	rogerandmaryellen@comcast.net
USS HARRY E. HUBBARD (DD 748)	May 15-19	(727) 363-3059	www.dd748.org dd748@mac.com
USS HAWKBILL (SSN 666)	May 19-21	(406) 788-2423	maalcorn@bresnan.net
USS HOLDER (DD/DDE 819, DE 401)	Oct. 9-13	(831) 458-9062	ussholder_dde819@hotmail.com www.ussholder.com
USS HORNET (CV 8, CV/CVA/CVS 12)	Sept. 24-29	(814) 224-5063	hornetcva@aol.com www.usshornetassn.com

USS INCHON (LPH/MCS 12)	April 7-11	(717) 203-4152	ussinchon@gmail.com
USS IWO JIMA (LPH 2/LHD 7)	Oct. 2-6	(757) 723-0317	yujack@megalink.net http://ussiwojimashipmates.cfns.net
USS JOHN R CRAIG (DD 885)	Sept. 4-8	(734) 525-1469	www.ussjohnrcraig.com jermail@ameritech.net
USS JOHN R PIERCE (DD 753)	Oct. 1-4	(337) 537-7533	cthomp9785@hughes.net www.ussjohnpiercedd753.com
USS JOHN S MCCAIN (DL 3 / DDG 35)	Sept. 30 - Oct. 3	(321) 952-2066	peteusna@aol.com
USS KNUDSON (APD-101)	May 19-21	(386) 789-8612	wjr502@cfl.rr.com
USS LAWRENCE (DDG 4/DD 250)	June 19-23	(814) 322-4150	www.usslawrence.com dguts@usslawrence.com
USS LEYTE (CV 32)	Oct. 2-6	(732) 727-5993	leyte1956@aol.com
USS MAUNA KEA (AE 22)	Oct. 3-6	(253) 279-9737	dadeeo2me@hotmail.com
USS MAURY (AGS 16) and USS SERRANO (AGS 24)	Oct. 14-18	(480) 969-3086	jmww03@cox.net
USS MITSCHER (DL 2 / DDG 35)	Sept. 30 - Oct. 3	(513) 542-9488	raymondsr@fuse.net
USS MONTICELLO (LSD 35)	Oct. 12-13	(209) 772-0543	beamer@ussmonticello.com www.ussmonticello.com
USS NEWMAN K PERRY (DD/DDR 883)	Oct. 20 - 22	(817) 291-7415	nkperry.com
USS NORFOLK (DL 1)	Sept. 30 - Oct. 3	(516) 293-4115	bobg190@verizon.net
USS OUELLET (FF 1077)	Sept. 18-22	(619) 917-9065	cwcrossan@cox.net http://uss-ouellet.org
USS PASSUMPSIC (AO 107)	Sept. 25-28		www.passumpsicao107.com brockman@eastex.net
USS RANDOLPH (CV/CVA/CVS 15) and USS TERROR (CM 5)	Sept. 22-29	(321) 454-2344	
USS RANGER (CVA/CV 61)	Sept. 18-22	(203) 453-4279	uss.ranger@yahoo.com
USS RICH (DD/DDE 820)	May 13-17	(860) 354-1563	reunion2013@ussrich.org www.ussrich.org
USS RICHMOND K TURNER (DLG/CG 20)	Sept. 12-15	(610) 285-2385	teempa@aol.com www.rkturner.com
USS RUSHMORE (LSD 14/47)	Sept. 22	(239) 731-1759	ri081539@juno.com
USS SAM RAYBURN (SSBN 635)	Oct. 13-17	(774) 233-0344	thunder1948@comcast.net www.ssbn635.org
USS SAN MARCOS (LSD 25)	May 16-19	(215) 287-4311	jacklieberman8104@comcast.net
USS SIGOURNEY (DD 643)	Oct. 3-6	(615) 824-0496 (615) 477-9796	tjzee@comcast.net
USS SPINAX (SSR/SS 489)	May 20-24	(401) 849-7282	jhunter2007@cox.net
USS STODDARD (DD 566)	Sept. 4-7	(732) 269-5416	keystonewillie@verizon.net
USS TARAWA (CV 40 & LHA 1)	April 25-28	(215) 547-0245 (765) 362-6937	walsue@accelplus.net
USS WAHOO (SS 565)	May 2-4	(603) 362-5781	tank@tomandshirleyyoung.com
USS WALLER (DD/DDE 466)	Sept. 18-21	(606) 365-2902	hawkeyefarm1@searnet.com
USS WILKINSON (DL 5)	Sept. 30 - Oct. 3	(619) 479-7387	hobocamp@aol.com
USS WILL ROGERS (SSBN 659)	April 4-7	(860) 449-1958	ctsunshine11@aol.com www.usswillrogersreunion.com
USS WILLIS A LEE (DL 4)	Sept. 30 - Oct. 3	(718) 934-6410	frankDL4@optonline.net
USS WINDHAM BAY (CVW 92)	Aug. 25-28	(210) 495-4845	windhambay@aol.com https://sites.google.com/site/windhambay
USS YELLOWSTONE (AD 27)	June 2-5	(352) 208-5400	bowp@att.net
VA 23	June 24-28	(865) 523-2005	anderson032@comcast.net
VA-176 Thunderbolts	Sept. 20-23	(757) 340-1511	jsutton123@cox.net

Retiree Seminars:

NSA Midsouth Retiree Seminar
June 15
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
(901) 874-5147/5075

NAS Pensacola Retiree Seminar
Oct. 19, Bldg 633
9 a.m. - Noon
(850) 452-5100

Retired Activities Office Phone Listing

Arizona
Retired Activities Office
Readiness Center
Navy and Marine Corps Reserve
1201 N 35th Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85009-3398
(602) 353-3033 OPT 4 Press 2
9 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Tue-Thu)

California
Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Weapons Station
Code 75H000D
1 Administration Circle
China Lake, CA 93555-6100
(760) 939-0978
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Bldg. 930
Naval Air Station
Lemoore, CA 93246-5001
(559) 998-2977
8 a.m. - Noon (Thu)

Retired Activities Office
Naval Base Ventura County
Fleet and Family Support Center
BLDG 1169
Port Hueneme, CA 93043-4301
(805) 982-1023
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Station, North Island
PO BOX 357033
San Diego, CA 92135-7033
(619) 437-2780
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Naval Station San Diego
Fleet and Family Support Center
3005 Corbina Alley, Suite 1
San Diego, CA 92136
(619) 556-8987
8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach
800 Seal Beach Blvd.
Bldg. 22 Room 2
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5000
(562) 626-7152
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Thu)
9 a.m. - Noon (Fri)

Connecticut
Retired Activities Office
Naval Sub Base, New London
Building 83, PO BOX 93
Groton, CT 06349-5000
(860) 694-3284
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Florida
Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Station, Jacksonville
Fleet and Family Support Center
554 Childs St Bldg. 876
PO BOX 136
Jacksonville, FL 32212-0136
(904) 542-2766 EXT 153
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station Whiting Field
7511 USS Enterprise St. Bldg. 3025
Milton, FL 32570-5000
(850) 623-7215 or 623-7177
8:30 – 11:30 a.m. (Mon/Fri)
Call for appointment

Retired Activities Office
VA Lakemont Campus, Rm. 125
5201 Raymond St
Orlando, FL. 32803
(407) 646-4204/4259/4262

Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station
151 Ellyson Ave.
Pensacola, FL 32508-5217
(850) 452-5622
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Hawaii
Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
850 Ticonderoga St
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860-5101
(808) 474-1999 EXT 6317
8 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Illinois
Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center,
Bldg 42
2601a Paul Jones St
Room 118
Naval Training Center
Great Lakes, IL 60088-5125
(847) 688-3603 EXT 132
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Louisiana
Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Station/Joint Reserve Base
New Orleans, LA 70143-5077
(504) 678-2134
9 a.m. - Noon (Mon-Wed-Fri)

Maine
Retired Activities Office
400 Foxtrot Ave.
Naval Air Station
Brunswick, ME 04011-5004
(207) 841-0582
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Tue-Thu)

Massachusetts
Retired Activities Office
Naval Reserve Center
85 Sea St
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 753-4636/26
9 a.m. - Noon
Call for appointment

Michigan
Retired Activities Office
44200 Jefferson Bldg. 780 Room 17
(S604)
Selfridge, Army National Guard
Base
Mt Clemens, MI 48045-5263
(586) 307-5580
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Tue-Fri)

Minnesota
Retired Activities Office
Naval & Marine Corps Reserve
Center
6400 Bloomington Rd Ft. Snelling
St Paul, MN 55111-4051
(612) 713-4664
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Tue & Thu)

Missouri
Retired Activities Office, St Louis
Naval and Marine Corps Reserve
Center
10810 Lambert International Blvd
Bridgeton, MO 63044-2314
(314) 524-9553
Tuesday: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Friday: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

New Hampshire
Retired Activities Office
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
Code 866 Bldg. 22
Portsmouth, NH 03804-5000
(207) 438-1860
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Tue-Thu)

New York
Retired Activities Office
25 Baiting Place Lane
Farmingdale, NY 11735
631-768-3248

Rhode Island
Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Station
1260 Peary St
Newport, RI 02841-1629
(401) 841-4089
9 a.m. - Noon (Mon-Fri)

South Carolina
Retired Activities Office
Naval Weapons Station Charleston
Fleet and Family Support Center
1005 Jefferson Ave. Bldg. 755
Goose Creek, SC 29445
(843) 764-7487 ext 16
Call for appointment

Tennessee
Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
NSA Memphis, Code N 763
Millington, TN 38054-5000
(901) 874-5195
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Tue-Thu)

Texas
Fleet And Family Support Center
3175 Vandenberg Ave.
Naval Air Station/Joint Reserve Base
Ft Worth, TX 76127
(817) 782-5537
8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Virginia
Retired Activities Regional Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
7928 14th St. Suite 239
Norfolk, VA 23521
(757) 444-5950
(757) 445-5326 (Fax)
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
1450 D Street
Norfolk, VA 23521
(757) 445-4380
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Washington
Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Station Everett
13910 45th Ave NE, Room 818
Marysville, WA 98271
(425) 304-3775/3721
10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station
Whidbey Island
Oak Harbor, WA 98278
(360) 257-8054/8055
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Wisconsin
Retired Activities Office
Navy and Marine Corps Reserve
Center
2401 South Lincoln Memorial Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53207-1999
(414) 744-9766
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Overseas: Rota, Spain
Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
PSC 808, BOX 53
FPO AE 09645-5500
011-34-956-82-3232 (from CONUS)
1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (Mon,Wed,Fri)

Ready Reference Contact Information

Air Force Retiree Services: (800) 531-7502; www.retirees.af.mil
Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 607-8000; www.arlingtoncemetery.org
Armed Forces Retirement Home: (800) 422-9988; www.afrh.gov
Army & Air Force Exchange Service: (214) 312-2011; www.aafes.com
Army Retired Services: (703)325-9158; www.armyg1.army.mil/retire
Burial at Sea Information: (866) 787-0081; www.npc.navy.mil
Combat Related Special Compensation: www.donhq.navy.mil/corb/crscb/crscmainpage.htm
DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317; www.tricare.osd.mil/deers
Defense Commissary Agency: www.commissaries.com
DFAS Casualty Assistance Branch: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955; (For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #1)
Fleet Reserve Association: (703) 683-1400; www.fra.org
Gulf War homepage: www.gulflink.osd.mil
I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672; www.npc.navy.mil/support/paypers/ID_Cards/Pages
Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; www.irs.gov
Marine Corps Retired Affairs: (800) 336-4649; www.usmc.mil (Hover over "Marine Services" then click on "Retired Services")
Medicare: (800) 633-4227. TTY: (877) 486-2048; www.medicare.gov
Military Officers Assoc. of America: (800) 234-6622; www.moaa.org
National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940
NPC Navy Reserve Personnel Management (PERS 9): (866) 827-5672, www.npc.navy.mil/career/reservepersonnelmgmt/Pages/
Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202
Navy Retired Activities Office: (866) U-ASK-NPC (866-827-5672) MILL RetiredActivities@navy.mil; www.npc.navy.mil/support/retired_activities/Pages
Navy Uniform Shop: (800) 368-4088; www.navy-nex.com/uniform
Navy Worldwide Locator: (866) U-ASK-NPC (866-827-5672); www.npc.navy.mil/organization/npc/csc/Pages/NavyLocatorService.aspx
Reserve Component SBP: (866) 827-5672 ask for PERS-912
Retiree Dental — Delta Dental: (888) 838-8737; www.trdp.org
Servicemembers Group Insurance (SGLI): (800) 419-1473; www.insurance.va.gov
Naval Historical Center: (202) 433-2210; www.history.navy.mil
Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213; www.ssa.gov

Pay/SBP Questions: www.dfas.mil

Pay inquiries and update of pay or SBP records in case of death, divorce or remarriage:
Retiree:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retirement Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London KY 40742-7130
(800) 321-1080, (216) 522-5955
SBP/RSFPP annuitant:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. military Annuitant Pay
P.O. Box 7131
London KY 40742-7131
(800) 321-1080, (216) 522-5955

TRICARE: www.tricare.mil

TRICARE North: (877) TRICARE (874-2273); www.hnfs.net/: CT, DC, DE, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, VA, WI, WV, some zips in IA, MO, TN
TRICARE South: (800) 444-5445; www.humana-military.com: AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, OK, SC, TN (except 35 TN zips near Fort Campbell), and TX (except the extreme SW El Paso area)
TRICARE West: (888) TRIWEST (874-9378); www.triwest.com: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, IA (except 82 zips near Rock Island), KS, MO (except St. Louis area), MN, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OR, DE, SW TX, UT, WA, WY
TRICARE Overseas: (888) 777-8343; www.tricare.mil
TRICARE For Life: (866) 773-0404; www.tricare.mil/tfl
TRICARE mail order pharmacy: (877) 363-1303; www.tricare.mil/pharmacy www.express-scripts.com

VA: www.va.gov

Regional offices: (800) 827-1000 (overseas retirees should contact the American Embassy/consulate), TDD (800) 829-4833
Insurance:
VA Regional Office and Insurance Center
PO Box 7208 (claims inquiries) -ORPO
Box 7327 (loans) -ORPO
Box 7787 (payments)
Philadelphia PA 19101
(800) 669-8477; www.insurance.va.gov
Burial information: (800) 827-1000; www.cem.va.gov
GI Bill: (888) 442-4551; www.gibill.va.gov

Records:

For replacement DD 214, service records, medical records, award information:
Retired prior to 1995: www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records
Retired
Retired after 1995:
Navy Personnel Command
PERS-312E
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055-3120
Fax requests to: (901) 874-2664
Gray-area reservists: (866) 827-5672

Navy recreation: www.mwr.navy.mil

Navy Gateway Inns & Suites: http://dodlodging.net
ITT: http://navymwr.org/mwrprgms/itt.html

Sister service retiree publications:

Air Force *Afterburner:* www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner
Army *Echoes:* www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/echoes.asp
Coast Guard *Evening Colors:* http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras
Marine Corps *Semper Fidelis:* *www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/Semper_Fidelis*

Explosive Ordnance Disposal 2nd Class Adam Pierce, right, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EOD-MU) 1, helps Navy Diver 3rd Class Joseph Ziemba, assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1, Company 1-5, cut the tow line to an airborne mine countermeasures device. The U.S. Navy is constantly deployed to preserve peace, protect commerce, and deter aggression through forward presence. Join the conversation on social media using #warfighting.

(Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Jayme Pastoric)