



Veterans Serving Veterans



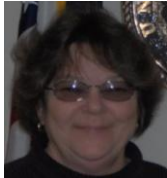
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GREENE COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICE

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From the Director: The Greene County Veterans' Service Commission and the staff of the Veterans' Service Office are honored and humbled to serve those who have served our great country in the United States Military.

Our main focus is to ensure that the veterans of Greene County have access to all of the benefits they may be entitled to receive as well as their dependents and that they are treated with respect and dignity.

We hope this newsletter is a helpful tool in providing information concerning veterans' benefits, legislation concerning veterans' issues at the local, state and national level and upcoming events in Greene County. We welcome your comments and feedback and if you have suggestions, please feel free to contact our office.

Once again, thank you for allowing us to serve you.

This newsletter contains the following articles:

1. VA Retro Pay Project [17] ----- (Name Change to CCP)
2. Reserve Retirement Age [18]----- (NDAA Issue)
3. Veteran Statistics ----- (Diminishing)
4. Camp Lejeune Toxic Exposure [07] ----- (S.1518)
5. Traumatic Brain Injury [09] ----- (Purple Heart Policy)
6. Saluting the Flag [04] ----- (Veterans)
7. Burn Pit Toxic Emissions [10] ----- (Epidemiologist Appalled)
8. Have You Heard? ----- (Puns for the educated?)

VA RETRO PAY PROJECT UPDATE 17: The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) have enacted a program referred to as CRDP/CRSC Processing (CCP), formerly VA Retro, to pay eligible military retirees any retroactive CRSC, CRDP and/or DVA disability compensation due as a result of retroactive increases in their percentage of disability, as determined by the DVA. The CRDP/CRSC Processing (CCP) program began in SEP 06. Since its' inception, CCP operations has successfully adjudicated over 386,000 accounts. Currently, the program receives and processes an on-going average of over 13,000 CCP cases each month. Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay (CRDP) were programs passed by Congress to allow eligible military retirees to be in receipt of additional monthly entitlements. The purpose of these additional monthly entitlements are to overcome some or the entire offset from retired pay associated with the receipt of disability compensation from the DVA. Prior to the passage of these programs, a retiree was not allowed to receive both military retired pay and DVA disability compensation.

DFAS and the DVA remain in communication with each other in order to continue to successfully recognize and complete these accounts. A retiree may be due funds from DFAS, the DVA or from both agencies. For CCP questions regarding DFAS payment, retirees may call DFAS at 1-877-327-4457. Once your account has been computed by DFAS, the information is forwarded to the DVA for additional validation and possible payment by the DVA. It is normal to experience a lapse in time between the payments from the two different agencies. Questions concerning disability ratings or payments due from the VA can be addressed by calling the DVA at 1-800-827-1000. Additional information can be found by clicking the CCP FAQs link at www.dfas.mil/retiredpay/ccpfaq.html.

RESERVE RETIREMENT AGE UPDATE 18: Two years after Congress decided to give credit toward earlier reserve retirement checks for time spent on active duty, the change's chief supporters are still fighting to make the new rules

apply retroactively to Guard and reserve members called to active duty immediately after the 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. Congressional negotiators writing a compromise version of the 2010 defense authorization bill will decide whether 600,000 National Guard and reserve members mobilized between 11 SEP 01, and 27 JAN 08, will be eligible to get their retirement checks 90 days before their 60th birthday for every 90 days of mobilization. The 90-for-90 rule now in law applies only for time spent mobilized after 28 JAN 08, when the 2008 Defense Authorization Act became law.

Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) who have championed legislation to allow reservists to receive retired pay before age 60, initially wanted mobilization credit to apply to anyone called up since 2001. But they were stymied when Congress finally got around to approving the initiative because they couldn't find money to cover the cost, estimated to be about \$550 million. Kerry and Chambliss convinced Senate colleagues to accept an amendment to S 1390, the Senate's version of the 2010 defense authorization bill, that applies the 90-for-90 rule to mobilization since 11 SEP 01. Inclusion of the amendment in the Senate bill sets the stage for House and Senate negotiators to discuss whether to include retroactive retirement credit in the final defense bill. While the House version of the bill, H.R.2647, includes no similar provision, one of the chief House negotiators on personnel issues, Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), unveiled a bill earlier this year that also would make the mobilization credit retroactive to 2001. Wilson was blocked from offering his legislation as an amendment to H.R.2647 because budget rules about paying for new initiatives are stricter in the House than in the Senate. Negotiators are not expected to make final decisions on the defense bill until September.

VETERAN STATISTICS: Today, there are roughly 1.4 million on active duty, less than half the nearly 3.5 million people on active duty we had at the end of the Vietnam War. The estimated population of the United States on 1 JUL 09 was 307,041,000. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS),

226,706,000 are in the work force. Throw in another 20,000,000 illegal aliens (no one really knows with certainty how many illegal aliens are in the United States), and you have a population base of roughly 327, 041,000 that is being defended by 1.4 million. That equates to only four tenths of a percent (.4%) of the population is defending the other 99.6%. If you include the 1.3 million in the Guard and Reserve who are now used as if they were active duty forces, there are a total of 2.7 million people defending the 327,041,000, or roughly eight tenths of a percent (.8%) defending the other 99.2%. In 1970, there were over 45 million living veterans in the United States. In 1999 there were nearly 30 million veterans of which 18 million were in the work force. Today, the BLS reports there are 22,196,000 living veterans of which 12,169,000 are in the work force. Depending on the survey, upwards of 1,700 veterans now die each day!

Historically, the unemployment rate for veterans has been one to three percent below the national average. In JUN 09, the unemployment rate for all veterans was 7.8% while the national unemployment rate was 9.5%. These numbers will probably rise in the July unemployment report. Historically, members of the Guard and Reserve faced a full call up during World War II and a partial call up during the Korean War. Of the 37,000 Guard and Reserve members who fought in the Vietnam War, all but about 200 were volunteers. But since 1991, there have been over 20 full call ups of the Guard and Reserve! Many of the activations have been for one and two year periods. Employers look on the component members as their human asset on loan to DOD, not as DOD's asset. Consequently, employers are quietly fighting back and not supporting the DOD call up policy. At present it appears that employers want to hire retired military, transitioning military that have completed their obligated service, and make great effort to hire our wounded and disabled warriors. But when it comes to hiring component members of the Guard and Reserve, employers will not hire them for solid economic reasons. This has manifested itself in the many reports from all over the country of companies using the excuse of the recession to target and lay off employees who are active members of the Guard and Reserve. Component

Guard or Reserve member who have been laid off are requested to forward the information to contact@vetjobs.com who is collecting real examples for future testimony before Congress

This data has many ramifications. With 37 years of an all volunteer military, America now has two generations of citizens that have no idea of what really goes on in the military and the importance of having a strong military. This lack of understanding impacts political and social attitudes towards the military. The population base for veteran service organizations is dwindling rapidly which is why many are changing their membership rules in order to maintain membership in a rapidly declining demographic environment. Today, there are fewer defenders of our freedoms living who understand the importance of maintaining a strong military. And without a strong military, we cannot maintain our freedoms, our free market capitalist economy and our constitutional republic. Remember these numbers when you talk to your representatives in Congress.

CAMP LEJEUNE TOXIC EXPOSURE Update 07: North Carolina's senior U.S. senator introduced a bill 28 JUL calling for the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care to veterans and their relatives who were exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. Sen. Richard Burr's bill, "Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act of 2009 (S.1518)," would grant care at a VA facility to any veteran or family member who was based at Camp Lejeune and suffers from adverse health effects. Burr's office did not specify what kind of health problems, only that they are connected to exposure to contaminated water. A Marine Corps spokesman, 1st Lt. Brian Block, said the service would study the bill before making a statement. "As far as pending legislation, it is something we'd be very interested in seeing because anything that impacts our former residents and Marines is very important to us," he said. "Our first concern is taking care of our Marines and their family members." Department of Veterans Affairs spokeswoman Katie Roberts said the VA can't comment on pending legislation. Water was contaminated by dry cleaning solvents and other sources at the base's

major family housing areas: Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point. It is impossible to know how many people would qualify, Burr's office said. Health officials believe as many as 1 million people may have been exposed to the toxins trichloroethylene (TCE) or perchloroethylene (PCE) before the wells were closed 22 years ago.

"Camp Lejeune veterans and their families deserve closure on this tragic situation," Burr said in a statement. He is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and is the ranking member of the Veterans Affairs Committee. Jerry Ensminger, a retired Marine master sergeant who lived at the base, applauded the bill. He said veterans from the base are being diagnosed with cancer and the VA is turning down their claim because it is not service connected. "At least this is a start. We haven't had that up to this point," said Ensminger, whose daughter was conceived at Camp Lejeune and died of childhood leukemia in 1985 at age 9. "This legislation is great for providing help to those who need it but it does not by any means exonerate the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps of their culpability on this issue." He would still like to see a hearing on the issue in front of the full Senate Armed Services Committee. It was not immediately clear how the care offered in Burr's bill would be funded. Burr's office said the bill will offer veterans and their families some relief while the problem is studied. "This is kind of a first step in providing the care these folks need," said David Ward, a Burr spokesman.

People who lived at the base have claimed everything from child leukemia to skin lesions and rashes. A report released earlier this month by the National Academy of Sciences said there are severe challenges in trying to connect the contaminants to any birth defects, cancer and many other ailments suffered by people who lived and worked on base. The 341-page report reviewed past studies of the base's water and called into question the value of further studies. Burr's office stressed that the National Research Council report is not the final word on the issue, and he looks forward to seeing the results of the ongoing study of water

by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Burr and Sen. Kay Hagan (D-NC) have also asked the Navy for details about gaps in information. Hagan plans to meet with Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in September, according to her office. Veterans who have not already done so should register on the official Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Registry at <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater> if they believe there is a possibility they or their family were exposed to the toxins.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY UPDATE 09: The House version of the 2010 defense authorization bill includes a provision ordering a review of military policies regarding the awarding of Purple Hearts to service members who suffer traumatic brain injuries. The provision, added to the bill at the urging of Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr.(D-NJ) is aimed at coming up with a consistent policy across the services about whether concussions or brain injuries that do not require immediate medical attention rate a medal for combat injury. The review requested by Pascrell would try to determine what level of injury would qualify for an award, a difficult issue because an injury that may seem minor when it occurs could have long-term consequences. Pascrell says he hopes the final policy doesn't have absolute requirements — such as seeking medical attention right away — because that would exclude people who do not immediately recognize the harm caused from the blast they just survived in combat.

SALUTING THE FLAG UPDATE 04: Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag only while wearing their organization's official head-gear. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 contained an amendment to allow un-uniformed servicemembers, military retirees, and veterans to render a hand salute during the hoisting, lowering, or passing of the U.S. flag. A later amendment further authorized hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel. This was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which

President Bush signed on 14 OCT 08. All other persons present should face the flag, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

Regarding the Pledge of Allegiance another section of federal code that specifically relates to actions of those reciting the Pledge was not amended. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag (i.e. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all), should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute. It is the belief of some that commissioned Officers of the US military, when in uniform, should not render a salute, nor say the Pledge of Allegiance, but stand at attention with their hands at their sides until the Pledge is completed. The alleged reasoning behind this is that Commissioned officers of the US military are already pledged to a higher "authority" the Constitution, in their oath of office. I could find no credible reference to support this belief. The phrase "under God" was added to the pledge by a Congressional act approved on 14 JUN 54.

BURN PIT TOXIC EMISSIONS UPDATE 10: When epidemiologist Shira Kramer first saw data about some 400 service members who say they were sickened by open-air burn pits in Afghanistan and Iraq, she said she was shocked to see how well their symptoms matched up with symptoms associated with toxic exposure. "I was appalled but not surprised to learn that there were so many serious adverse health effects," she said. "We know open pit burning is very dangerous." Kramer, who has a doctorate in epidemiology and co-authored a textbook about it, was invited by lawyer Elizabeth Burke to research the burn pits

to compile evidence for several class-action lawsuits against military contractor KBR. The military typically disposes of waste in burn pits during contingency operations, but KBR took over burn-pit operations for the largest of the pits at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. In a memo dated 20 DEC 06, Air Force Lt. Col. Darrin Curtis, former bioenvironmental flight commander at Balad, said the chemicals to which troops there may have been exposed include: dioxin, the same chemical that made Agent Orange so toxic; benzene, an aircraft fuel known to cause leukemia; arsenic; dichlorofluoromethane, or Freon; carbon monoxide; ethyl benzene; formaldehyde; hydrogen cyanide; nitrogen dioxide; sulfuric acid; and xylene.

Kramer said the mix of chemicals, and their combination with particulates such as ash and sand, may have made the problem worse. "You have a toxic brew that is ... much more dangerous than individual chemicals alone," she said. "The absorption onto particulate matter then allows these chemicals not only to deeply penetrate into the lungs, but also to have a dwell time in the lungs." Air Force officials say the burn pit at Balad has been cleaned up - the 90,000 water bottles a day that were being burned are now recycled, and hazardous materials are no longer making their way to the pit. But even if the pit burned only wood and paper, the troops would still be at risk, Kramer said, noting that burning wood produces dioxin. "Uncontrolled, open burning of any of these materials represents a hazard. The symptoms can be signs of acute respiratory problems and blood cancers... Troops stationed near burn pits who began coughing and spitting up black stuff - 'plume crud,' they call it - should have served as a warning to military officials. The acute effects are a tip-off that something quite troubling is going on... Military data showing that chronic obstructive pulmonary disease cases have risen by 12,000 a year since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began are especially troubling. ..You would not expect to see COPD in a young, healthy population ... in this age range," she said. "It's extremely unusual and unexpected."

HAVE YOU HEARD:

Puns for the educated?

- The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference . He acquired his size from too much pi.
- I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian .
- She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.
- A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.
- The butcher backed into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
- No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
- A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
- A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
- Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
- Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
- Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other, "You stay here; I'll go on a head."
- I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: "Keep off the Grass."
- A small boy swallowed some coins and was taken to a hospital. When his grandmother telephoned to ask how he was, a nurse said, "No change yet."
- A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
- The short fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- The man who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- A backward poet writes inverse.
- In democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.
- When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
- Don't join dangerous cults: Practice safe sects!



The Look of the Greene County Veteran Service Van.

NEW VAN POLICIES:

EFFECTIVE 5-18-2009. Due to our economic situation, it has become necessary to make the following changes to our transportation program. We do not want to implement pick-up points for our veterans, so we ask that you try to adhere to the following:

- If at all possible, we ask that your medical appointments at the Dayton VAMC be morning appointments.
- Appointments **MUST** be coordinated with the Transportation Department at least 48 hours prior to your scheduled appointment.
- Transportation **MUST** be coordinated by calling Ben Beekman or Gene Palm at the following numbers:
 - Ben Beekman: 937-562-6026
 - Gene Palm: 937-562-6027
- The van will **ONLY** make 1 (one) trip to the VAMC in the morning and will return when all morning appointments have been completed.
- A limited number of afternoon appointments will be accepted. We will be utilizing our County Vehicle (Ford Crown Victoria) for afternoon appts. **SPACE IS LIMITED**, so please try and make your appointments morning appointments.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN GREENE COUNTY:

**Greene County Fair, County Fair Grounds, Xenia
The Dayton 100-100 Lap Late Model Race, Kil-Kare Speedway, Xenia
Yellow Springs Book Fair, Mills Lawn Elementary School
Annual Sweet Corn Festival, Community Park, Fairborn
Cedarfest, call 937-766-5851 for times, Cedarville
Popcorn Festival, Dayton-Xenia Road, Beavercreek**

**9/11 Memorial Ceremony, Downtown Fairborn
Old Fashioned Days Festival, Shawnee Park, Xenia
U.S. Air Force Band of Flight Concert, USAF Museum
Beavercreek Heritage and Herb Days, Wartinger Park, Beavercreek
Bean Festival, Downtown Jamestown
Potato Festival, Main Street, Spring Valley
Street Fair, Yellow Springs**

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