



Wounded Warrior Voice

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TOPIC OF THE MONTH: Warrior Care Month

November, known for Veterans Day and Military Family Appreciation Month, is also designated as the Army's Warrior Care Month. AW2 will be out in your communities to discussing the important role Families and caregivers play in the recovery process of wounded warriors. Families and caregivers have a voice in shaping future programs and policies that affect warrior care. The Army is actively seeking ways to include Families and caregivers in warrior care programs and processes. For example, AW2 encourages Families and caregivers to make their voice heard by participating in the AW2 Symposium. Please read the next article to learn more about the AW2 Symposium and talk to your AW2 Advocate.

WHAT'S NEW: Your Voice is Making a Difference

By LTC Deb Cisney, Operations Officer

Are you ready to tell the Army and Veterans' Affairs (VA) what you REALLY think? If so, keep an eye out for the 2011 AW2 Symposium issue solicitation link in the AW2 Symposium section of the AW2 website at www.aw2.army.mil.

The input you provided, in the form of issues and recommendations, to the previous six AW2 Symposiums contributed to significant improvements in wounded warrior care and transition services. Your recommendations resulted in new legislation for caregivers, improved VA special adaptive housing and travel reimbursement benefits, the addition of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and uniplegia to the Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) eligibility criteria, and the expansion of Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) to include servicemembers with less than 20 years of service.

AW2 Symposium issues/recommendations also streamlined the casualty notification process, developed the financial side-by-side to enable Soldiers to make informed decisions, streamlined the Continue on Active Duty (COAD) process, developed the five year plan, expanded the AW2 eligibility criteria, ensured all wounded warriors receive Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) transition services, contributed to the physical disability evaluation system (PDES) transformation, contributed to the creation/design of the Army's Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) and Soldier Family Assistance Centers (SFACs), developed a streamlined federal hiring process for wounded warriors and spouses, and

established the AW2 Career and Education Section. We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

WHAT'S NEW: Website Dedicated to Suicide Prevention

The Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee (SPARRC) launched <http://www.suicideoutreach.org> on October 1, 2010. This website streamlines suicide prevention resources for easy access to a clearinghouse of information. It serves as a comprehensive resource with access to hotlines, treatments, programs, forums, and multimedia designed to support all servicemembers, Veterans, Families, and health professionals. Additionally, you can find links to service-specific suicide prevention resources as well as reliable and accurate information on a range of suicide prevention related topics.

(SOURCE: Defense Centers of Excellence Blog, <http://www.dcoe.health.mil/blog/article.aspx?ID=1&postID=154>)

MONEY MATTERS: Tax Season Preparation

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) customers with myPay access can retrieve their tax statements electronically up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery. MyPay maintains historical data for the current tax year (for retirees) and current tax year and two prior years (for annuitants). Tax statements available through myPay are approved for use by the IRS and have several benefits. Retirees must keep their mailing address current or they will not receive information concerning their account. To ensure retired pay accounts are current and up-to-date, retirees should review their account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>. Any change to a retired pay account will not take effect for 30 calendar days after change has been submitted.

All retirees who access myPay have automatically consented to receive only an electronic 1099-R. The consent remains in effect each year unless the retiree changes their delivery option within myPay by turning on/off hard copy of 1099R under "Taxes." Retirees not enrolled in the myPay system may retrieve their form by calling (800) 321-1080. Retirees will receive one 1099-R reflecting both taxable retired pay and taxable Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay received during the year. Retirees who received any taxable Special Compensation for the Severely Disabled (SCSD) payment(s) during the year will receive two 1099-Rs, one for taxable retired pay and one for SCSD.

MONEY MATTERS: Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended

By Ron Perry, Finance Advisor

The deadline for eligible servicemembers, Veterans, and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to December 3, 2010, allowing personnel more time to apply for the benefits they have earned. The deadline extension is included in the continuing resolution signed by President Obama and provides funding for federal government operations through December 3. It's important that all those eligible for this benefit take the opportunity to apply for what they have earned and members who are eligible should apply as soon as possible to avoid the last minute rush, which can increase processing time.

RSLSP was established to compensate military members whose service was

involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between September 11, 2001, and September 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries can submit a claim through the Army's secure website at <https://www.stoplosspay.army.mil/mail> in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status. The original deadline for claims was October 21, 2010. When RSLSP began on October 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 servicemembers, Veterans, and beneficiaries were eligible.

MONEY MATTERS: Bills Are Not Laws

By Dexter Friday, Finance Specialist

Part of the AW2 Finance Cell responsibilities is to ensure AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families receive correct information and proper education on their benefits. We are charged to ensure you receive updates and changes to potential benefits in a timely manner. Another part of our responsibilities is to dispel misinformation that may be out there that may cause confusion for you. If you hear something about increases in Concurrent Receipt of Disability Pay (CRDP) or Veterans Affairs compensation amounts, please have your AW2 Advocate check with the AW2 Finance Cell before you start making plans.

There are many bills in both the House of Representatives and Senate that may affect the wounded warrior population. It is important to know that as bills they are subject to change and to delays in being signed into law. Bills currently being worked by Congress may not have actual dollar figures established yet, therefore should not be depended on. AW2 headquarters is monitoring them and will ensure that you will be made aware of any approved changes made in the laws/statutes which govern compensation or benefits that affect the AW2 population.

CAREER & EDUCATION: AW2 Veterans and Federal Employment

By Scott Cox, Career and Education Specialist

If you are interested in acquiring federal employment, please work with your AW2 Advocate and AW2 Career and Education Section for more information on federal hiring. Many Veterans do not know there are advantages related to military service that they can leverage. It is a process that involves Veterans preference, qualifications, federalized résumés, and the required forms—Standard Form 15 (SF-15), DD Form 214 (DD-214), and a VA letter of Veterans Preference Certification. AW2 can assist, please contact your AW2 Advocate.

CAREER & EDUCATION: School Programs for Veterans

By Scott Cox, Career and Education Specialist

Many schools are rethinking how to best serve today's Veterans, recognizing that additional programs that help the Veteran transition to an academic environment can be worthwhile in recruiting and retaining Veteran students. While AW2 does not endorse any school college, university, or educational or training program, we do provide information about programs that may have added value and benefit above a normal recruitment level.

For example, Park University in Parkville, MO, has the Veterans For Success Program (<http://military.park.edu/success.shtml>). This program is designed to provide a smooth and comprehensive transition to college for Veteran students. Suffolk University in Boston, MA, has a program called Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) (<http://www.suffolk.edu/offices/39470.html>). Suffolk University is a free pre-collegiate program that helps eligible Veterans develop the academic and personal skills necessary for success in a program of post-secondary education. VUB is a federally funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Work with

your Advocate to check with your local campus organizations for availability of Veteran specific transition courses or programs. However, be mindful of accreditation issues and potential associated costs.

FAMILY: Courage to Care Fact Sheets in Impact of Invisible Injuries

By Nancy T. Vineburgh, Asst. Prof. Dept of Psychiatry, USUHS

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress has developed fact sheets, "The Impact of Invisible Injuries: Helping Your Family and Children." These fact sheets address the complexity and challenges for Families in which a parental injury causes no change in one's appearance, but rather changes in one's behavior. This injury duality—looking the same, but not acting the same—is troubling for Family members, friends, and co-workers, and can be particularly confusing for children who thrive on parental consistency, trust, and safety. Each fact sheet provides "action steps" that parents can employ to help children integrate the parental injury within the Family. Please visit <http://www.couragetotalk.org> to review resources and stay connected.

FAMILY: Suicide Prevention Resources

The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) have suicide prevention-related articles and actual shared stories from servicemembers available on their Real Warriors website. Please visit <http://www.realwarriors.net>. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK. If you need help locating resources for psychological health, contact the DCoE Outreach Center at (866) 966-1020 or by logging onto Real Warriors Live Chat at <http://www.realwarriors.net/livechat>.

The Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee (SPARRC) launched <http://www.suicideoutreach.org> on October 1, 2010. This website streamlines suicide prevention resources for easy access to a clearinghouse of information. It serves as a comprehensive resource with access to hotlines, treatments, programs, forums, and multimedia designed to support all servicemembers, Veterans, Families, and health professionals. Additionally, you can find links to service-specific suicide prevention resources as well as reliable and accurate information on a range of suicide prevention related topics.

(SOURCE: Defense Centers of Excellence Blog:

<http://www.dcoe.health.mil/blog/article.aspx?ID=1&postID=154>, Real Warriors Campaign E-Mail Update: September 2010)

AW2 COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK: Nominate Organizations That Have Helped You

By Patty Sands, WTC Stratcom

In the month of October, the AW2 Community Support Network welcomed 15 new organizations. In total, the AW2 Community Support Network stands at 179 organizations. Please visit the AW2 Community Support Network at <http://www.aw2.army.mil/supporters/index.html>. To nominate an organization that seeks to assist AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families, please contact AW2 at (703) 901-5111 or AW2communitysupportnetwork@conus.army.mil.

VA UPDATE: Comprehensive Veterans' Benefits Signed Into Law

By Jane Dulin, AW2 VA Liaison

Veterans Benefits Act of 2010 (H.R. 3219) was signed into law on October 13, 2010, by President Obama. Highlights of this bill include an increase in the amount of supplemental insurance for totally disabled Veterans, and an opportunity for Veterans to increase the amount of Veterans' Group Life Insurance coverage. Additionally, the bill allows severely burned individuals to be eligible for the Automobiles and Adaptive Equipment Benefit and enhances the amount of the Automobile Grant to \$18,900 from the current \$11,000 limit. To read the bill in its entirety, please go to http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h3219enr.txt.pdf. If you have any questions, please contact your AW2 Advocate.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Sharing your stories lets other Soldiers, Veterans, and Families know that they are not alone in dealing with an injury, wound, or illness. Sharing what you do and learning what others are doing to address these issues creates new opportunities for healing. AW2 may publish your story on the AW2 Blog. We would also like to highlight special messages from spouses and children for their loved ones on the AW2 Blog. Messages should be between one to three paragraphs long or could be a drawing or a short poem. If your Families would like to send in their messages, please e-mail AW2Stratcomm@conus.army.mil.

THE BLOG UPDATE: October

Serving You–The National Resource Directory

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/22/serving-you%e2%80%93the-national-resource-directory/>

Welcome to the AW2 Community Support Network

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/14/welcome-to-the-aw2-community-support-network/>

Project Odyssey–Revitalizing an AW2 Soldier's Confidence

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/14/project-odyssey%e2%80%93revitalizing-an-aw2-soldier%e2%80%99s-confidence/>

Navigation 101: Surviving the Impossible

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/13/navigation-101-surviving-the-impossible/>

What Would You Share?

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/11/what-would-you-share/>

Deadline Extension–Education Initiative at KU Application Submission

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/04/deadline-extension%e2%80%93education-initiative-at-ku-application-submission/>

It's About the People

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/10/01/its-about-the-people/>

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