



## Wounded Warrior Voice

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## TOPIC OF THE MONTH: Suicide Prevention Month

Suicide is a potentially preventable tragedy that profoundly impacts the Army Family. The Army and DOD continue to bring behavioral wellness and eliminating stigma to the forefront of Soldier, Veteran, and Family care. Seeking help shows strength, not weakness. If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, seek help from any resource. Here are some resources to keep in mind:

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK
- [Veterans Chat](#): Enables Veterans, their Families, and friends to go online where they can anonymously chat with a trained VA counselor
- [TRICARE Assistance Program \(TRIAP\)](#): TRICARE beneficiaries may speak with a licensed counselor 24/7 through computer, internet, and webcam
- [Veterans Affairs](#): Each VA Medical Center has a suicide prevention coordinator for Veterans to receive needed counseling and services

## WHAT'S NEW: AW2's New Director, COL Greg Gadson

LTC (P) Greg Gadson became the new AW2 Director on July 13, 2010. As he served in every major conflict in the last two decades, his career focused on serving Soldiers. "At AW2, I will continue to measure success through Soldiers, as they transition back to active duty or to a productive civilian life," said Gadson. "I am ready to start putting in the hard work that will ensure AW2 continues to be an umbrella of expertise for all AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families." During his service in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2007, Gadson was severely wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED), resulting in the amputation of both legs above the knee and severe damage to his right arm. He emphasizes that his injuries are not the important part of his story; instead, he focuses on what he has done since. Gadson was promoted to colonel on August 26, 2010. To read more about COL Gadson's message to AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families visit the AW2 Blog at <http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/07/13/new-director%e2%80%99s-message-to-aw2-soldiers-veterans-and-families/>.

## WHAT'S NEW: AW2 has a New Toll Free Number

AW2's toll free number has changed to (877) 393-9058 and the DSN (overseas number) is (312) 221-9113. Please make a note of the new number. The AW2 contact center is providing the same assistance and support, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST. You can also visit the AW2 website at [www.AW2.army.mil](http://www.AW2.army.mil) for more information on the program.

## AW2 SYMPOSIUM: Your Voice is Making a Difference

AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and Caregivers have been doing a great job of “telling the Army what they really think” over the past five years—especially through AW2 Symposiums. AW2 Symposium issues that are within the Department of the Army (DA) purview to resolve are forwarded to the annual Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) World Wide Conference. To date, 20 AW2 Symposium issues have been selected by HQDA AFAP Conference Delegates as top tier priorities for the government to work. The top five issues from the HQDA AFAP Conference—and previous issues recommended for closure—are forwarded to the AFAP General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) meeting. This year, GEN Peter W. Chiarelli, Vice Chief of Staff, Army, chaired the June 30 meeting. Three of the top five 2010 HQDA AFAP Conference issues originated AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, Families, and Caregivers at the 2009 AW2 Symposium. These issues are:

- Issue 654 - Monthly Stipend to Ill/Injured Soldiers for Non-Medical Caregivers
- Issue 653 - Funding Service Dogs for Wounded Warriors
- Issue 648 - Behavioral Health Services Shortages

Of the 40 previous issues recommended for closure at the AFAP GOSC, 27 were closed/complete, six were closed/unattainable, and seven will remain active. An issue is closed when it has been completed to the satisfaction of the VCSA or has been deemed unfeasible. Three of the issues considered for closure at this GOSC originated from AW2 Symposiums:

- Issue 627: TRICARE Network Provider Access to Military Medical Records was closed/complete
- Issue 604: Retroactive Traumatic Service Members' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) Compensation was closed/unattainable
- Issue 621: Minimum Disability Retirement Pay for Medically Retired Wounded Warriors will remain active

Your voice is heard and your contributions make a difference for wounded warriors and their Families. To learn more about these issues and many other HQDA level active AFAP issues, go to the newly launched AFAP Issue Search application at <http://www.myarmyonesource.com/>.

## BENEFITS: Behavioral Health Options for Military Couples

Marital therapy or counseling can be covered by TRICARE Prime when it is based on a behavioral health diagnostic evaluation by a TRICARE provider. TRICARE Prime-enrolled spouses of active duty service members can seek marital therapy or counseling in the United States or overseas as part of the first eight outpatient behavioral health care visits allowed per fiscal year. This can be done without a referral from a primary care manager or prior authorization from their regional health care contractor. Active duty servicemembers need a referral for all

behavioral health care received in the TRICARE network. For more information, visit <http://www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth/>.

(SOURCE: Army OneSource Family News (August), <http://www.myarmyonesource.com/>)

## **BENEFITS: Find Medication Information Fast with the New TRICARE Formulary Search Tool**

Beneficiaries and providers can use the new TRICARE formulary tool to find the most up-to-date information about prescription medications. The new formulary search tool, located at [http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary\\_search.php](http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary_search.php), allows beneficiaries to easily find which medicines are in the uniform formulary. These are available at all full-service military treatment facilities and covered by TRICARE. Once a user identifies if a drug is available, they can use the search tool to get information on the drug. For more information, visit <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/news.aspx?fid=641>.

## **MONEY MATTERS: Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay**

Soldiers and Veterans who were extended beyond their normal Expiration Term of Service (ETS) could be paid \$500 for every month or partial month served in stop loss status from September 11, 2001, to September 30, 2009. A Soldier or Veteran who believes they are entitled to stop loss special pay can submit a claim before October 21, 2010. For additional information or assistance, contact the program management office at [retrostoplosspay@conus.army.mil](mailto:retrostoplosspay@conus.army.mil) or (877) 736-5554 or visit <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

## **MONEY MATTERS: Ensuring Correct Entitlement Calculations**

Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and Concurrent Receipt Disability Payment (CRDP) are now incorporated within the Estimated Disability Calculator (EDC). However, the EDC may provide reserve Soldiers with misleading information concerning CRSC and CRDP entitlements. CRSC calculations require active federal service years to include the VA pay scale and the Army disability rating. If correct dates are unknown, the amount calculated will be incorrect. CRSC is based upon Pay Entry Basic Date (PEBD) and Basic Active Service Date (BASD) for all Soldiers, therefore, a DA Form 1506 should be completed prior to separation, this will ensure the Soldier PEBD and BASD is correct. Therefore, reserve Soldiers must have 20 active federal service years to qualify for CRDP. Reserve Soldiers who completed 20 years of service as a reservist, do not qualify for CRDP until they are 60 years old. Please work with your AW2 Advocate and AW2 Finance Specialists to ensure you are receiving the appropriate entitlements.

## **CAREER & EDUCATION: Scholarship Opportunities**

There are many scholarship opportunities available for AW2 Soldiers and Veterans. Please visit these websites if you are interested in the below scholarships and discuss options with your Advocate.

- TRACK Program through the Wounded Warrior Project: Student receives a scholarship for fees, books, materials, laptop, housing, and living expenses. It also provides a student grant for the 12-month period of classes and a portion of this amount is saved and returned with interest after successfully completing the program. Classes are provided in Jacksonville, FL. For more information, visit <http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/content/view/702/1001/>.
- SMART Program through the National Defense Education Program: The Science, Mathematics And Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship for Service Program is an opportunity for students pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines to receive a full scholarship and be gainfully employed upon degree completion. For more information, visit <http://www.asee.org/fellowship-programs/undergraduate>.
- National Institute of Health Fellowship: This program encourages students from under-represented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to seek graduate degrees in the biomedical and behavioral sciences to help increase the number of well-trained scientists from under-represented groups. The fellowship provides up to five years of support for research training leading to the Ph.D. or equivalent research degree, the combined M.D./Ph.D. degree, or other combined degrees in the biomedical or behavioral sciences. For more information, visit <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/funding/training/redbook/gradf31.htm>.

## CAREER & EDUCATION: Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Recruiting Wounded Warriors

NAVSEA's Wounded Warrior Program seeks to arm experienced warriors with the necessary education and training to expand their workforce. NAVSEA offers a stable job with the top health, educational, and retirement benefits of the federal government. Opportunities are available for transitioning warriors of all military services. NAVSEA is looking for engineers, scientists, technicians, and managers to join their team of more than 58,000 at 38 activities located around the country and overseas. NAVSEA offers wounded warriors internships, apprenticeships, employment, and educational counseling. For more information, visit <http://www.navsea.navy.mil/Organization/WoundedWarriors.aspx>.

## FAMILY: New Program Honors Military Kids, Friends With Fun

DOD and USO created the "Me and a Friend" program, which provides free tickets to major league sporting events, theater performances, museums, and other venues for military children and their friends. The program creates a sense of normalcy for military children by offering free tickets for military children to attend events of their choosing with a friend. For more information, visit <http://www.uso.org/>.

(SOURCE: DOD News, <http://www.defense.gov//News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=59900>)

# FAMILY: Nominate Caregivers to Receive Free House Cleaning

Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation is asking for caregiver nominations to receive free house cleaning for up to a year. A nomination will automatically enter the caregiver into a random drawing. Nominations must be made before October 24, 2010. There are two ways to nominate a caregiver in the sweepstakes, go to [Facebook.com/FamilyMWR](https://www.facebook.com/FamilyMWR) or send the required information to [mwrpromotions@us.army.mil](mailto:mwrpromotions@us.army.mil) with the subject "Caregiver Nomination." For more information, visit <http://www.armymwr.com/travel/recreationcenters/caregivers.aspx>.

# VA UPDATE: Simplifying the Process For a Veteran to Claim Service Connection For PTSD

VA announced a critical step forward in providing an easier process for Veterans seeking health care and disability compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register. By publishing a final regulation in the Federal Register to simplify the process for a Veteran to claim service connection for PTSD, VA reduces the evidence needed if the trauma claimed by a Veteran is related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and is consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of the Veteran's service.

This science-based regulation relies on evidence that concluded that a Veteran's deployment to a war zone is linked to an increased risk of PTSD. Under the new rule, VA would not require corroboration of a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA doctor confirms that the stressful experience recalled by a Veteran adequately supports a diagnosis of PTSD and the Veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor. VA expects this rulemaking to decrease the time it takes VA to decide access to care and claims falling under the revised criteria. For additional information, go to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call (800) 827-1000.

(SOURCE: VA Press Release, <http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1922>)

# 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](mailto:AW2Stratcomm@conus.army.mil).

# THE BLOG UPDATE: August

Another AW2 Veteran Presents at the 2010 VA Ann Harbor Welcome Home Celebration

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/31/another-aw2-veteran-presents-at-the-2010-va-ann-harbor-welcome-home-celebration/>

A Mother's Perspective: The 2010 AW2 Symposium

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/30/a-mother%e2%80%99s-perspective-the-2010-aw2-symposium/>

A Rewarding Challenge for an Artilleryman

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/26/a-rewarding-challenge-for-an-artilleryman/>

They Laugh At Me, That's The Goal

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/24/they-laugh-at-me-that%e2%80%99s-the-goal/>

Lending a Hand: 7,000 Mile Hike for Military Families in Need

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/19/lending-a-hand-7000-mile-hike-for-military-families-in-need/>

Don't Give Up on Me, I Won't Give Up on You

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/17/don%e2%80%99t-give-up-on-me-i-won%e2%80%99t-give-up-on-you/>

The "American Citizen" Defined

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/16/the-%e2%80%9camerican-citizen%e2%80%9d-defined/>

True Representatives of America

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/11/true-representatives-of-america-2/>

CaringBridge: Online Support for Wounded Warriors

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/10/caringbridge-online-support-for-wounded-warriors/>

Checkout DCoE's Next Monthly Webinar: "Reintegration: Adjusting to Life at Home After Deployment"

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/07/21/checkout-dcoe%e2%80%99s-next-monthly-webinar-%e2%80%9creintegration-adjusting-to-life-at-home-after-deployment%e2%80%9d-2/>

Nothing Is What I Thought It Would Be: A Reservist Wife's Perspective

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/09/nothing-is-what-i-thought-it-would-be-a-reservist-wife%e2%80%99s-perspective/>

Operation Enduring Care—Wounded Warrior Family and Caregiver Conference

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/05/operation-enduring-care-%e2%80%93wounded-warrior-family-and-caregiver-conference/>

Burn Guys Are Hot

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/03/burn-guys-are-hot/>

\$1.25 Million Olympic Fund Looking to Boost Local Sports for Disabled Veterans and Soldiers

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2010/08/03/1-25-million-olympic-fund-looking-to-boost-local-sports-for-disabled-veterans-and-soldiers/>

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U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)

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