



131st BW RAO Newsletter



Serving all branches

July - September 2019, 3rd Quarter Issue

The O'Fallon Veterans Office/131st BW Retirees Activities Office, MOANG, is committed to providing its retirees the best support possible. The office is staffed with former members of the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines. We have been lucky in having these veterans and retirees volunteer to provide this support. The RAO has an on-going need for volunteers to assist and inform the retiree. We offer service five days a week from 9 AM till 4 PM Monday thru Friday.

Upcoming Events

On each Wednesday there is "Coffee Talk" for the veterans at Grace Baptist Church, 3601 Ehlmann Road, St. Charles Mo. At 9:00 AM.

July 18 Thursday --- Monthly Luncheon 1100 Hrs. Café Telegraph, 650 Telegraph Rd, St. Louis, MO 63125. Located near the intersection of Telegraph Road and Kingston Drive just outside of Jefferson Barracks. (314) 200-9952 <http://www.cafetelegraph.com/>

August 15 Thursday --- Monthly luncheon 1100 Hrs. Olive Garden, 5529 South Lindbergh. 314 849 2553. Located near South Lindbergh and Tesson Ferry Rd

131st AIRMEN'S ASSOCIATION (INC.)

On Saturday 8th June 2019 the 131st Airman's Wing Reunion was held next to Hangar 1 from at the former 131st FW base at Lambert St. Louis Airport from 1800-2400.

This is from a Facebook posting by courtesy of Steve Mills.

131st Airmen's Association Saturday night's 131st Reunion Dinner Party. I great time was had by all. The weather could not have been any better. Well done Steve "29" Mills and friends for organizing a wonderful party.

Thank you for joining and supporting the 131st Airmen's Association!

The Association's inaugural event on Saturday, 8 June 19 was a huge success and a blast. I would like to thank the sponsors who supported us and the volunteers who made it possible.

Most of all, I would like to thank you, my fellow 131st Airmen for your generosity. Colonel Leeker, President of the Board of Directors, was able to present Lori Stock with a check last Friday in the amount of \$4,583. This is why our Association exists...to take care of our own.

I would especially like to thank Christy Brandt, Lynn Lundstrom, and Carol Walsh for the fantastic job they did of collecting donated items and leading the fundraising aspect of our event.

It was great to reconnect with my fellow warriors on our old ramp after all these years. I was proud to be among you once again, if only for a few hours. The 131st has flown over 41 different aircraft in its' almost 100 year history. Our unit may have moved but our legacy of excellence in accomplishing our Mission has not. And neither have the proud Citizen Airmen who follow us. It's just a new day, in a new jet, with a new mission.

Stay tuned for future events as we try and grow our Association in order to accomplish our Mission..."I Will Never Leave An Airman Behind".

Thanks again for your generosity and support,

Steve "29" Mills, Lt Col, MOANG (Ret)
131st Airmen's Association
Event Co-Chairman

More information and pictures can be found on their website (131stairmen.org)/Facebook book page ([https://www.facebook.com/131stairmenassociation/131st Airmen's Association](https://www.facebook.com/131stairmenassociation/131stAirmen'sAssociation))..

PENTAGON WORKING TO MAKE THE DD-214 ELECTRONIC

The days of having to keep a tidy copy of your [discharge paperwork](#) to prove you were in the service could be coming to an end. The Defense Department is working on creating a fully electronic version of the seminal [DD 214 document](#), which would give veterans access to all of their information and cut down on the privacy concerns raised by the current form.

The goal is to bring the new forms online by 2024 at the latest.

Perhaps, a hard copy "certificate of release or discharge" could be an abbreviated version, with just the information a veteran would need to prove past service, rather than a detailed history of it.

"Ultimately, we would love to have this down to something that is really useful and succinct for the member." But at the same time, that complete list of information could be online, where a veteran could log in to view and it send or download it if there were ever questions about past assignments, deployments or awards.

The department is looking at about three to five years to get the new DD 214 fully online, Bauer said, which dovetails with the services' individual efforts to create integrated pay and personnel systems, where something like this form could be accessed in the future.

The new DD 214 process could only apply to service members who are not yet separated. Current veterans will keep their existing documentation.

MILITARY RECORDS/DD214, “Emergency” Request and Deadlines

If your request is urgent (for example, upcoming surgery, a funeral, etc.) tell NDAA the nature of the emergency and your deadline in the "Comments" section of eVetRecs (<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>) or in the "Purpose" section of the Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records. Fax your request to NDAA’s Customer Service Team at 314- 801-0764. Call NDAA’s customer service staff at 314-801-0800 if you have questions or require same-day service. Due to the large number of calls received at this number, hold times are often long. However, once you reach a technician, he or she will be happy to assist you with emergency service.

If your burial request involves interment at a Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery, contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 or visit the National Cemetery Administration website https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits. We work directly with the Veterans Affairs staff to obtain records to verify service for burial benefits. If the veteran is not going to be interred at a National Cemetery, the requester may fax the SF-180 or signature page from eVetRecs (including signature of the next of kin and proof of death) to the Customer Service Team at 314-801-0764. [Source: NDAA | May 22, 2019 ++]

VA WILL SOON LET YOU GO TO URGENT CARE DOCTORS

Got a sore throat or a sprained ankle and don't want to go to a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital? Got sick at 8:00 on a Friday night and don't want to wait until Monday to see a VA doctor? A new VA program may be for you.

Starting June 6, 2019, the VA will offer medical care to eligible veterans at selected civilian urgent care facilities nationwide.

This is an expansion of the VA's Mission Act, which itself was an expansion of the Veterans Choice Act. The Choice Act was passed in 2014 as the result of highly publicized problems with veterans not being able to get appointments at VA hospitals in a timely manner. Under this new expanded program, veterans are eligible to get limited urgent care from civilian doctors regardless of how close they are to a VA facility.

Eligibility

If you are enrolled in the VA health care system and have received VA medical care within the last 24 months, you should be eligible for this program. However, you should contact your local

VA medical facility before visiting a civilian urgent care provider. Only certain services and providers are covered under this new benefit. If you visit a provider that isn't part of the program, or you get medical treatment that isn't covered under this program, you may end up paying out-of-pocket.

You don't have to go to a civilian doctor if you don't want to. The VA says that most of its locations, including hospitals and community-based outpatient clinics, offer same-day services for most situations.

Once the program has begun, you should contact your local medical office to check your eligibility. Or you can call (866) 606-8198. You can also find civilian community-care locations near you at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>.

Payments

One way this program differs from regular VA medical care is that you may have to make a co-payment to see the civilian doctor. The amount depends on your VA Priority Group and how many times you visit civilian doctors each year. Typically, you get three free visits each year.

Co-Payments for Office Visits

- Priority Groups 1-5. There is no co-payment for the first three visits during a calendar year. For all subsequent visits, the co-payment is \$30.
- Priority Group 6. If the visit is for medical treatment related to combat and chemical exposures such as Agent Orange; contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, NC; Gulf War Syndrome, etc., as well as some mental illnesses, there is no co-pay for the first three visits during a calendar year. For all subsequent visits, the co-payment is \$30. If the visit is not related to these conditions, the co-payment is \$30 per visit, for all visits.
- Priority Groups 7-8. The co-payment is \$30 per visit.

There is no co-payment for any Priority Group for flu shots.

Co-Payments for Prescriptions

If you get a prescription from an urgent care center, you should fill it at a VA network pharmacy. If you go to an out-of-network pharmacy, you will have to pay the full price at the drug store and then file a claim with the VA to get your money back.

If you are given a prescription for what the VA considers routine or maintenance drugs (such as blood pressure or cholesterol drugs), you will have to get those filled by the VA.

Some veterans may be required to make a co-payment for medication. Prices are based on your Priority Group, as well as the type of drugs prescribed. For details, see https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/copays.asp.

When the benefit starts, you will be able to contact the VA Health Resource Center for questions related to urgent care co-payments at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).[Source:Military.com]

VETERANS FAQ ► How can I increase my 70% rating?

Q. I am currently rated at 70% and have been told by my doctors at VA and even the nurses who say I should be 100%. I tried to get it moved up and they just denied it. They said I was already given 70% for my hearing but the hearing isn't my problem. I don't sleep, I have stomach problems, and I am in the head all morning until around 12 or 1 pm or until I leave my house. If someone can help me I would appreciate it. I can't work even in the yard for very long. Maybe an hour or 2 in the evenings. But then have to sit down and can't work long at all. Any ideas how I can get to 100%?

Answers

A1: Without any listed diagnoses. I have to assume that one is IBS which is rated at 30% maximum rating. Depending on the circumstances of what got you to 70% you may be able apply for Individual Unemployability if you cannot work. Otherwise it takes quite a bit of percentage to get to 100 from 70 as VA math is very hard for many to understand. Take for example, if you ever reach a true 90% rating, it takes another 50% rating just to get to the 100% rating. There are so many variables that makes it hard to provide a solid straight answer. I always recommend using a Service Officer if one is available to you. (JH) 4/23/19

A2: I suggest putting together a strong portfolio of documents provided by your healthcare providers. You may have to file a new claim. Contact your local VA office, The American Legion for details on that. Also, contact your member of Congress. (JG) 4/23/19

A3: Look into individual unemployable for substantial gainful employment (VA form Feb 2016, form number 21-8940 an approximately 30 work week. If approved your rating would become 100%. (AA) 4/23/19

A4: I had the same problem was denied twice. I was at 40%. I contacted Woods and Woods lawyers and am now at 90% and they are going for Individual Unemployability. The great thing about a lawyer is they only get 20% of all backpay. And they only collect if they get you increased. (TH) 4/23/19

A5: Are the remaining issues of your case service connected? You may not be eligible for any increase if not. The harsh reality is that everyone is not eligible for 100%. Those who are

should resign themselves to the fact that they will be waiting for longer than you might think. In any case, get yourself a service officer, take him all of your paperwork and let he or she help you with your claim. WELCOME HOME !! (RF) 4/23/19

A6: See your DAV or VSO, Maybe they can get you some help or get a vet lawyer. (MH) 4/23/19

A7: This is what broke the 'log jam' for me: I assigned the DAV as my representative. They were VERY effective. And I worked with my County's "Veterans Services Officer" (your County. may not have this help, but my County - in Oregon - has found that, by assisting Vets to be awarded the true Disability Rating that they are entitled to, the extra money paid to the vet adds significantly to the local economy and reduces the costs of social services that the County might otherwise have to provide to the vet. CONTINUE to be your own advocate! No one else knows your situation better than you. You may have to call on people who know you well to substantiate your situation, as difficult as it may be to ask for that help, it IS LIKELY that you'll need it. If you ask, they WILL help!

[Source: U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs | May 19, 2019 ++]

VETERANS FAQ, I need to get raised from 90 to 100% so I can get dental care.

Q. How does a person get their disability increased to 100% from 90%? I now have floaters in my eyes and nothing is being done. My teeth are getting real bad and causing problems VA doesn't do anything on dental until you are 100%. I've had a heart attack and stents placed in my heart. I fall a lot of the times. I live alone and have a hard time getting up and down cleaning the house. I can't afford to pay someone to help me. Cannot afford to go into a nursing home. HELP please!

Answers

A1: It's important to talk to your doctor about your health and ask what the plan is to specifically address each problem. Floaters in the eyes are a normal part of aging but make sure you don't have a detached retina which is a sight threatening emergency. File a claim with the VA for gum disease secondary to heart disease. If you're falling you might have a circulation problem due to the heart disease and that alone should qualify you for aid and attendance. Poor circulation negatively affects the gums and diseased gums negatively affect the heart so a secondary claim is justified. (EC) 4/26/19

A2: It will be very hard to get from 90% to 100%, but it can be done. On your floaters, VA will not pay for that. I realize that they aren't normal, but it comes with the aging process. On

your heart attack and stents that's a different story. Get all of your doctor's statements, reports, everything from all of your heart doctors and submit a new claim on Ischemic Heart Disease. Submit ALL medications that have been prescribed and that you are taking. Get a DBQ (Disability Benefits Questioner) Form and take to your Cardiologist so he can fill it out for you. Submit that with your new claim.

Are you Diabetic? If you are, again send in with your new claim and all medications that you are taking. Get another DBQ for Diabetes and have the doctor that is treating you for that to fill it out. One word of caution, VA doctors will rarely fill out DBQ Forms, but you might get lucky. Civilian doctors WILL fill them out, because you are personally paying them to treat you.

On your living alone, having hard time cleaning up, etc., and not being able to pay someone, there IS some help available for you and it is called: AID AND ATTENDANCE. If you can go in person, go to your VA Regional Office and there you will find the Aid and Attendance Office and explain your problem. If you cannot travel there, call your VA Regional Office and request the AID AND ATTENDANCE office; explain your problem and I am sure they will give you an answer. Good Luck My Brother! Remember be Patient BUT Persistent! (RA) 4/26/19

A3: You need to file for Unemployability. With that you will be bumped up to 100% pay and that will give you dental. (RI) 4/26/19

A4: You say you're at 90% disability. If you cannot work have you tried putting in for Individual Unemployability (IU) where you keep your 90% rating but get paid at the 100% rate. It's worth looking into if you haven't applied yet and are not able to work. Good luck! Keeping you in prayer! (JB) 4/26/19

A5: You should see about getting rated as unemployable, which pays at 100%. (TK) 4/26/19

[Source: U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs | May 19, 2019]

VETERANS FAQ, Am I Eligible For Benefits?

Q. I'm 72 years-old, and my husband is 100% disabled through VA and has health care through them too. I'm wondering if I was eligible for health benefits from VA also?

Answers

A1: Since your husband is 100% disabled you are eligible for CHAMPVA. You need to get enrolled in DEERS. This can be done at any military base. You keep CHAMPVA for life as long as you dont remarry. (BG) 5/24/19

A2: As far as I know yes, you are eligible. You need to go to the VA website and search there. The website will give you the answers but I would just call the VA and ask. I am sure you are eligible. (ED) 5/24/19

A3: Yes, you are definitely eligible and should already be covered by CHAMPVA for your health insurance. (JB) 5/24/19

A4: I think there is a age cut off for the spouse to qualify for ChampVA. The younger you are the better. Its a great health insurance that picks up the bills which Medicare doesn't including medication. (JM) 5/24/19 [Source: U.S. Veteran Compensation Programs | June 15, 2019]

VACATION DEALS, Military-Only Treasures

Whether you're looking for a vacation within a few hours' drive from home, or looking to travel to a dream destination a little farther, you don't have to break the bank. Check out some military deals available. There are military cottages, lodges, campgrounds and RV parks around the country in beautiful settings accessible only to those in the military community, regardless of branch of service. Beyond those, discounts abound on tickets, hotels, cruises, air travel, rental cars and more. Some places to start:

- **American Forces Travel** (<https://www.americanforcestravel.com>) , the only official Defense Department site for travel discounts on airfare, flights, hotels, car rentals, travel packages and cruises, was launched earlier this year. Those eligible include active duty, Guard, Reserve, Coast Guard, retired military, and their eligible family members. The site is connected to the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS, and authenticates you quickly. You have access to more than 1.2 million properties in more than 76,000 destinations worldwide, with discounts of up to 60 percent on hotels. A help desk is available 24 hours a day.

When you're searching for prices, make sure you do some comparison research ahead of time to get the best deal. The vendors must at least have a military exclusive price to be part of the website, but there are other additional properties and deals listed, too. You'll see military deals in the mid-range properties, for example, as well as in high-end properties. The site is run through a contract with Priceline, and there's a price guarantee to at least match the best rates offered by airlines and other travel sites. There's a best price guarantee for airfare and all the product lines. Check back frequently for special promotions. Discount tickets for various attractions will be available within the next three to six months.

- **Government Vacation Rewards** (www.govvacationrewards.com/mwrvacation) offers military-only travel discounts:
- **Armed Forces Vacation Club** (<https://www.afvclub.com>) offers military-only travel discounts:
- **Paths Across America** (<https://www.armymwr.com/programs-and-services/outdoor-recreation/camping-rv-parks>): Some of the best-kept vacation secrets are found in camping and recreational vehicle parks across the country, operated by all the branches of

service. From lakes in South Carolina to beaches in Washington state, many sites have cottages or lodges as well as camp sites and RV sites. Various recreational activities are offered at the sites. Visit this website and click on a state. Although it's an Army MWR site, it features locations operated by each branch of service in each state. Prices vary. Each site lists available types and number of campsites/RV sites/cabins/lodging, along with contact information.

- **Armed Forces Recreation Centers** (www.military.com/travel/military-lodging-armed-forces-recreation-center.html): Visit Dragon Hill Lodge in South Korea; Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Germany's Bavarian region; Hale Koa Hotel in Waikiki Beach, Hawaii; or Shades of Green at Walt Disney World Resort, Florida. Visit this website for information about availability, pricing and reservations. At this writing, for example, there was still availability in July and August for Shades of Green. All branches of service are eligible.
- **Other military discounts.** Offered by countless other hotels, recreation parks and others. In just one example, Hawks Cay Resort in the Florida Keys offers discounts to military and veterans starting at \$129 per night, plus discounts on activities. Their annual program runs from Aug. 1 until Dec. 19. Visit www.hawkscayheroes.com for more information and to book reservations. Among the many hotels offering military discounts year-round are La Quinta by Wyndham, Red Roof Inn, and Westgate Resorts. Many attractions offer discounts, too. One example: At your choice of SeaWorld, Busch Gardens or Sesame Place, one free admission per year for military personnel.
- **Blue Star Museums** (<https://www.arts.gov/national-initiatives/blue-star-museums>): More than 2,000 museums nationwide are offering free admission through Monday, Sept. 2. This year's participating museums are located in all 50 states, as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, and include fine art, science history and children's museums, zoos, aquariums, gardens and more. For a list of participating museums, hours of operation and other information, visit their website.
- **Vet Tix** (www.vettix.org). Check with for free tickets with a handling fee of less than \$20) to various family programs, concerts, sporting events and performing arts.
- **Veteran Canteen Services** (<https://memberdeals.com/vcs/hotels.php?sub=alldestinations&login=1>) offers discounts and deals on hotels, theme parks & attractions, rental cars, and tickets.
- Always check with your local tickets and tours office on the nearest military installation for other exclusive deals on a variety of deals on tickets and other offers.
- Check with on-base lodging facilities for space available.

[Source: Military.com | June 5, 2019 ++]

AAES, recruiting veterans to fill downrange positions

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is recruiting veterans to bring a taste of home to warfighters downrange.

The 123 year old Department of Defense retailer is seeking veterans to deploy to fill various positions wherever the Exchange operates within Southwest Asia and Eastern Europe.

“When the Exchange hires veterans for downrange assignments, these former service members draw on the same strong work ethic, commitment and loyalty they used to serve our country” said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Luis Reyes, the Exchange’s senior enlisted advisor. “Many already have served downrange and now they are able to give back, supporting troops on the front line.”

No matter where America’s troops go, the Exchange goes with them. The Exchange operates 41 direct-run stores on 32 installations in eight Middle East countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, as well as on installations in Europe, such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Romania, Poland and Bulgaria.

This program supports the Exchange’s commitment for hire 50,000 veterans and military spouses by 2020. Veterans can look for jobs at Apply/MyExchange.com. Many veterans already have the favorable security clearance needed to work downrange, which can save three to 15 months in conducting necessary background checks.

Deployments with the Exchange range from six months to a year, with an option to extend up to two years. After their deployments, veterans are eligible to apply for other jobs with the Exchange. (Courtesy of AAFES News Service)

LINK TO RETIREE PUBLICATIONS

Army Echoes

<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Navy Shift Colors:

www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

Air Force Afterburner:

www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:

www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/

Semper Fidelis

Coast Guard Evening Colors:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

INPUT: If you have any suggestions for any type of additional articles you may like to have included in the future newsletters please email us. We look forward for more input from you and other agencies.

We will publish this newsletter four times a year if the supply of information is available.

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