

Veterans Corner
May 2009
By: Robert G. Mitchell

Disabled Veterans and those Receiving Pension

Veterans in receipt of service-connected compensation or non-service-connected pension, as well as survivors in receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), will receive a one time stimulus payment of \$250. The legislation orders the Secretary of the Treasury to disburse a \$250 payment to each individual who fulfills the conditions set aside, for any month during the 3-month period ending with the month which ends prior to the month that included the date of the enactment of this Act. Therefore, veterans in receipt of compensation and pension benefits during any of the months of November or December 2008, and/or January of 2009 are eligible for this payment. The legislation also provides this benefit to citizens in receipt of certain Social Security benefits as well as those receiving benefits under the Railroad Retirement Benefit. Citizens are not entitled to receiving benefit from multiple sources. If a veteran is also in receipt of one of these other benefits, the \$250 payment will only be issued once.

VA Secretary establishes ALS as a presumptive Compensable Illness

Veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) may receive badly needed support for themselves and their families after the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that ALS will become a presumptively compensable illness for all veterans with 90 days or more of continuously active service in the military.

“Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it was appropriate to take action,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake said. Secretary Peake based his decision primarily on a November 2006 report by the national Academy of Sciences’ Institute of medicine (IOM) on the association between active-duty service and ALS.

The new interim final regulation applies to all applications for benefits received by VA on or after September 23, 2008, or that are pending before VA, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit on that date.

VA will work to identify and contact veterans with ALS, including those whose claims for ALS were previously denied, through direct mailings and other outreach programs. To view the entire regulation in the Federal Register go to:

www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2008-21998PI.pdf

To file a claim for ALS contact the Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency at 518-884-4115.

VA Reaches out to Veterans and Spouses

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans about an under-used, special monthly pension benefit called Aid and Attendance.

Although this is not a new program, not everyone is aware of his or her potential eligibility. The Aid and Attendance pension benefit may be available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care or who live in nursing-homes or assisted-living facilities.

Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home and Assisted Living expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self support and in need of regular personal assistance.

The Aid and Attendance income threshold for a veteran without dependents is \$19,736 annually. The threshold increases to \$23,396 if a veteran has one dependent, and by \$2,020 for each additional dependent. The annual Aid and Attendance threshold for a surviving spouse alone is \$12,681. This threshold increases to \$15,128 if there is one dependent child and by \$2,020 for each additional child.

Additional information and assistance in applying for the Aid and Attendance benefit may be obtained by calling Robert Mitchell at the Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency at 884-4115.

Veteran Business Owners

The New York State Veterans Business Council would like to invite you to our two day conference that will be held at the Harriman State Campus, Albany, New York on May 19-20, 2009, starting at 9am each day. This invitation is open to all veteran owned businesses throughout New York.

The focus of the conference is to introduce you to the New York State Veterans Business Council. Over the past several years, the Council has helped to create positive legislation in the State of New York for Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses and Veteran Owned Businesses alike. This two day conference will demonstrate and explain how your business could participate in this legislation and how implementation would take place.

There is a \$25 registration fee to attend. If you have any questions please call Joe Franklin at 374-6043.

Attention Military Retirees

Saratoga Springs Naval Base is looking for volunteers for their retired actives Office (RAO) Interested Retirees should contact the Administration Office LCDR Hudson at 886-0200 X 2.

Veterans Wanted

Drywall Laborers and Experienced Tapers (own tools), Call for an interview 893-7318.

Blue Star Mothers

Blue Star Mothers of America Inc., Capital Region chapter #2 – NY is looking for membership. In order to join you must be the mother of an active-duty or honorably discharged military personnel or step-mother of a child before they were thirteen years of age. For more information write to Blue Star Mothers chapter #2 – NY P.O. Box 243 Delmar, NY 12054 or visit their website at www.capitalregion2bsm.org.