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NEWS BRIEFS

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VA to Provide Payments to Eligible Surviving Spouses

The Department of Veterans Affairs is taking immediate action to quickly identify and pay surviving spouses who are eligible to receive a one-time compensation or pension payment for the month of a veteran's death. Some surviving spouses did not receive the veteran's VA compensation or pension payment for the month of death after a 1997 law allowed the payments.

A federal VA task force is identifying beneficiaries who never received the benefit, or were required to repay the money that was issued during the month of the veteran's death. The VA will begin issuing retroactive payments to eligible surviving spouses at the end of the month.

Surviving spouses are encouraged to contact the Survivors' Call Center at the toll-free telephone number, 1-800-749-8387, or call their County Veterans Service Office for assistance.

VA Urges Veterans to Sign-up for Direct Deposits

The Department of Veterans Affairs is teaming up with the Treasury Department in a new campaign to protect government beneficiaries against the theft of funds and of their identities.

Every month, 730,000 veterans or their surviving dependents look for their compensation or pension checks in their mailboxes. Nearly all receive them, but theft and mail delays cause problems for some veterans, which can be prevented by direct deposit.

The VA is urging those veterans and family members now receiving paper checks to join nearly 3.1 million others whose VA payments are safely deposited electronically.

There are several ways veterans or their family members can sign up for direct deposit. They can call the Go Direct toll free number at 1-800-333-1795, or enroll on-line at www.GoDirect.org. Beneficiaries can also start a direct deposit by contacting the VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 or their financial institution.

VA has a Re-training Program for Unemployable Veterans

Veterans awarded 100 percent disability compensation based upon their unemployability may request an evaluation and, if found eligible, may participate in a vocational rehabilitation program and receive VA assistance in securing employment.

A veteran with an unemployability rating who secures employment under this special program will continue to receive disability compensation without reduction until the veteran has worked continuously for 12 months. For assistance, please contact your County Veterans Service Office.

VA Disability Compensation Program Available to Eligible Veterans

The VA may pay monetary benefits, called disability compensation, to eligible veterans who are evaluated by the VA as disabled by diseases or injuries which were incurred in or aggravated by military service.

There is no time limit on filing a disability application; however, the timely filing of claims for service-connected medical conditions after release from service may prove to be more beneficial and can expedite eligibility for VA health care at VA expense.

Commemorative Automobile License Plates Available to Veterans

Eligible veterans who are residents of Alabama may apply for automobile commemorative license plates that recognize several categories of veterans among which are WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Persian Gulf and War on Terrorism era veterans.

Eligible applicants must pay the regular license fee and an additional payment for each license plate. Please visit your County Veterans Service Office or your county licensing official for assistance.