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Rear Admiral W. Clyde Marsh, USN, (Ret.)  
Commissioner

## NEWS BRIEFS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Celebrate Independence Day with Thanksgiving and Remembrance**

For 233 years, our Nation has lived in liberty and freedom because of the foresight and courage our founding fathers had when they declared their independence from Great Britain by adopting the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

As America celebrates the day with fireworks, parades, barbecues, picnics and baseball games, let us give thanks for our sovereignty, and remember the brave men and women of yesterday, and those who are serving today in uniform, for defending and securing our freedoms and liberties for more than two centuries.

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### **VA Begins Stimulus Payment to Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has requested the Department of the Treasury to make \$250 payments to eligible Veterans as part of President Obama's recovery plan. The first payments were sent Monday, June 22. All payments will be distributed by June 30.

The stimulus payment is part of the President's recovery plan. VA is making one-time payments of \$250 to eligible Veterans and survivors to offset the effects of the current economy.

To be eligible for the payment, VA beneficiaries must have received VA's compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), or spina bifida benefits at any time between November 2008 and January 2009. No application is necessary.

Beneficiaries will receive their payments the same way they receive their monthly VA benefits -- either by direct deposit or in the mail. The law allows one \$250 payment per person. The payment is tax-free.

VA beneficiaries who also receive benefits from the Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board will be paid through those agencies, and will therefore not receive the payment from VA.

For more information on the Veterans stimulus payment, visit the VA's Website at [www.va.gov/recovery](http://www.va.gov/recovery).

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### **VA Promotes United We Serve Campaign**

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki is encouraging Americans to volunteer their services by participating in President Obama's "United We Serve" campaign. "United We Serve" is a summer service program which encourages Americans to recommit themselves to improving their communities.

Helping Veterans is one way volunteers can serve. Secretary Shinseki said there is no better way to honor America's heroes than to spend time every week giving back to those who have already given so much.

The campaign, coordinated by the Corporation for National and Community Services, is encouraging Americans to develop their own service programs that benefit their communities.

The campaign runs through September 11, 2009, which will be National Day of Service and Remembrance. Toolkits for developing projects are available online at [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov).

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## **VA Provides Additional DIC Payments for Certain Surviving Spouses with Children**

VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits, known as DIC, may be authorized by the VA to the eligible survivors of military personnel who die in the line of duty while on active duty, to include active duty for training, or when death occurs after active military service due to a VA rated service-connected disability.

The rates of DIC payments vary and are based upon specific eligibility criteria. For instance, for up to two years after entitlement to DIC commences, the payment to a surviving spouse who has a child or children under 18 years of age is increased by \$286 per month.

This is in addition to any other DIC compensation payment the surviving spouse may receive including payments for depending children. For more information on VA benefit programs, please contact your County Veterans Service Office.

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## **VA's Prescription Copayment Exemptions for Eligible Veterans**

Certain veterans are exempt from the VA pharmacy co-payment if their annual income is below a dollar threshold which is the amount of the VA pension that a particular veteran would receive if the veteran were otherwise eligible for a VA pension.

That amount will vary depending on the number of dependents the veteran has, if any, and whether the veteran is in need of regular aid and attendance of another person. For more information, contact your nearest VA medical facility.

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## **Reimbursement of Travel Costs**

Certain Veterans may be provided special mode travel (wheelchair van, ambulance) or reimbursed for travel costs when traveling for approved VA medical care. The VA will reimburse Veterans at 41.5 cents per mile and is subject to a deductible of \$3 dollars for each one-way trip and \$6 dollars for a round trip to a VA medical facility.

The VA's maximum monthly deductible is \$18 dollars per calendar month. Call or visit your County Veterans Service Office to find out if you are eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses to a VA treatment facility.

