



## Wounded Warrior Voice

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## WHAT'S NEW: WTC and AW2 Launched Social Media

You asked for it and WTC and AW2 listened. AW2 launched the AW2 Facebook<sup>®</sup> page. This new capability will let AW2 interact with more AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Families more often—and in real time. This new social media capability will allow AW2 to better support the long-term independence of AW2 Soldiers and Veterans. To view the AW2 Facebook<sup>®</sup> page, go to <http://facebook.com/armyAW2>. If you have a Facebook<sup>®</sup> account, you can "like" us and start interacting with wounded warriors and their Families.

WTC expanded its social media capabilities by launching the WTC Twitter<sup>®</sup> page. WTC will tweet frequently to release beneficial information in a more timely fashion. To view the WTC Twitter<sup>®</sup> page, go to <http://twitter.com/armyWTC>. If you have a Twitter<sup>®</sup> account, you can "follow" us and start receiving instantaneous updates each time WTC tweets. AW2 will also continue blogging about AW2 news, individual Soldier stories, wounded warrior resources, and other topics on the AW2 Blog at <http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/>. Make sure you continue to follow us here, comment, and share your perspective. Check the AW2 Facebook<sup>®</sup> page frequently for updates. Hope to see you online.

## WHAT'S NEW: WTC Videos Available to View/Download

WTC released two new videos. Warriors in Transition: A Story of Resilience is a 30-minute video of one wounded Veteran and his spouse sharing their personal story from point of injury through transition to educate those who work directly with wounded warriors about the unique challenges facing this population and their Families. Wounded Warriors—Adaptive Sports is a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) about wounded warriors and adaptive sports. A 508 compliant digital version can be downloaded from <http://wtc.army.mil/video/wtcpsa.html>.

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## **AW2 SYMPOSIUM: Tell the Army What You Really Think**

*By LTC Deb Cisney, AW2 Operations Officer*

Now is your chance to tell the Army what you really think by submitting an issue for this year's AW2 Symposium. This is your opportunity to influence and change policies related to warrior care and transition for wounded, injured, and ill Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families. Issues selected and prioritized by delegates at previous symposiums have been brought to the attention of the Army resulting in positive changes. For example, one of the issues created and submitted at the 2010 Symposium was standardized training for designated wounded warrior caregivers. This issue was raised at the 2011 Army Family Action Plan Conference and was voted in the top five issues. The 7th AW2 Symposium will be held in Orlando, FL, July 17-22, 2011. Approximately 300 Soldiers, Veterans, and Family members have attended AW2 Symposiums since their inception in June 2006, and 75 issues have been prioritized and worked by the Army and Veterans Affairs. We are also asking AW2 Soldiers, Veterans, and Family members to apply to become delegates at this year's Symposium. AW2 will select 65 delegates to represent the AW2 population at the Symposium. To apply to become a delegate or submit an issue, please contact your AW2 Advocate. For more information on the AW2 Symposium, visit <http://wtc.army.mil/aw2/symposium/index.html>.

2010 AW2 Symposium delegate and Veteran, Matt Staton, stated, "I can leave this event knowing that my voice, and the voices of the Soldiers I represent, will be heard. The AW2 Symposium is an excellent process for the Army to listen and to improve warrior care. All the delegates leave with the knowledge that a lot of people in the Army are striving to improve the care we wounded warriors receive."

## **MONEY MATTERS: IRS and VA Benefits**

*By Jane Dulin, AW2 VA Liaison*

Servicemembers should look on the IRS website to find more information on the need to file a tax return at <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0..id=96623.00.html>. Here is what IRS says about VA benefits.

Do not include in your income any Veterans' benefits paid under any law, regulation, or administrative practice administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The following amounts paid to Veterans or their Families are not taxable.

- Education, training, and subsistence allowances
- Disability compensation and pension payments for disabilities paid either to Veterans or their Families
- Grants for homes designed for wheelchair living
- Grants for motor vehicles for Veterans who lost their sight or the use of their limbs
- Veterans' insurance proceeds and dividends paid either to Veterans or their beneficiaries, including the proceeds of a Veteran's endowment policy paid before death
- Interest on insurance dividends left on deposit with the VA
- Benefits under a dependent-care assistance program
- The death gratuity paid to a survivor of a member of the armed forces who died after September 10, 2011
- Payments made under the compensated work therapy program • Any bonus payment by a state or political subdivision because of service in a combat zone

Note: If, in a previous year, servicemembers received a bonus payment by a state or political subdivision because of service in a combat zone that they included in their income, they can file a claim for refund of the taxes on that income. Use Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, to file the claim. File a separate form for each tax year involved. Generally, they must file their claim

within three years after the date they filed their original return or within two years after the date they paid the tax, whichever is later. See the instructions for Form 1040X for information on filing that form.

## **MONEY MATTERS: Understanding Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) and Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)**

*By Dexter Friday, Finance Advisor*

If a Soldier is retired, their Department of Defense disability retired pay may be offset by the amount of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation they are awarded. However, to compensate for the reduction, the CRDP and CRSC programs were enacted by legislation to replace the portion that is offset. A military retiree cannot receive both CRDP and CRSC. The two benefits will be calculated and compared annually by Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS), and the greater of the two will automatically be paid to the member. However, if a member's personal circumstances make it more advantageous to take the lower amount or the member prefers to receive one entitlement over the other, the member may choose to do so within 45 days of receipt of first payment or during an annual open season from December through January.

**To qualify for CRDP**, a member must be eligible for longevity retirement with at least 20 years of active service and have a VA disability rating of at least 50 percent. Soldiers with 20-year letters are not eligible for CRDP until retirement age of 60, even if on Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL) or Permanent Disability Retired List (PDRL). However, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers on TDRL or PDRL may receive CRDP upon retirement if they have completed 20 years active service. Payment is not made separately from military retired pay or VA compensation; it simply replaces the amount of military longevity retired pay that is reduced by VA compensation. The end result is full receipt of military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation. A military retiree does not need to apply for CRDP, DFAS obtains information from the VA and pays it monthly as part of the member's military retired pay. CRDP is a taxable entitlement.

**To qualify for CRSC**, a member must be retired and have a disability that is combat related (e.g., a disability that is service connected but not combat related would not qualify). The payment amount is based on the difference between a member's years of service retired pay and what the member is receiving in disability retired pay. Reserve and National Guard CRSC calculation is based on active service completed. The maximum CRSC payment cannot exceed what the member's longevity retired pay would be based on the member's years of service. It is possible that members with lower disability rating percentages and fewer years of service, especially at lower ranks, may have no CRSC entitlement. CRSC is non-taxable entitlement.

**To receive CRSC, members must apply to their military branch of service.** Applications must include documentation verifying the disability was incurred in a combat related situation (i.e., incurred as a direct result of armed conflict; as a result of hazardous service; in the performance of duty under conditions simulating war such as training; or through an instrumentality of war). Once approved, the military branch of service will send an award letter to the individual and a copy to DFAS. Once DFAS receives the approved award letter, payment will be initiated within approximately 30 days. Retroactive payments will generally be issued within 60 days of receiving the first monthly payment. Applications, DD Form 2860 Application for Combat-Related Special Compensation, as well as, completion and submission instructions can be obtained online at <https://www.hrcapps.army.mil/site/crsc/index.html>.

# **MONEY MATTERS: Wounded Warrior Basic Allowance for Housing**

***By LTC Vince Gallman, Army G-1, Compensation and Entitlements***

The Military Advisory Panel (MAP) unanimously approved the change to the Joint Federal Travel regulation (JFTR) for Wounded Warriors' Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). The change is effective March 22, and will be posted in the May 1, 2011, update to the JFTR.

The amendment allows the continuation of BAH for Soldiers with dependents occupying the 2-bedroom apartments, whether Temporary Duty (TDY) or Permanent Change of Station (PCS), and Soldiers without dependents on TDY who are receiving housing allowance at the permanent duty station. Soldiers without dependents who are on PCS and staying in the 2-bedroom apartments will receive BAH-Partial. Defense Travel Management Office will issue the signed Uniform Travel Determination soon and post it to <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/>.

# **CAREER & EDUCATION: Impact of Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2010**

***By Jane Dulin, AW2 VA Liaison***

On January 4, 2011, President Obama signed into law the Senate Bill (S-3447), "Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2010." A brief summary of this new law's impact is outlined below.

Effective now but not payable until October 1, 2011:

- Expands the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include Active Service performed by National Guard members under title 32 U.S.C. for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard; or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency

Effective August 1, 2011:

- Simplifies the tuition and fee rates for those attending a public school and creates a national rate for those enrolled in a private or foreign school
  - No individual state caps
  - Private school costs are capped at \$17,500 annually
  - The Yellow Ribbon Program still exists for costs above the cap
- Allows VA to pay kickers on a monthly basis instead of a lump sum at the beginning of the term and also pay kickers to those who are attending school at half-time or less
- Allows those who are eligible for both Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to choose the Post-9/11 GI Bill's monthly housing allowance instead of the Chapter 31 subsistence allowance
- Allows reimbursement for more than one "license and certification" test (previously only one test was allowed)
- Allows reimbursement of fees paid to take national exams used for admission to an institution of higher learning (e.g., SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT)
- Break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or strike

Effective October 1, 2011:

- Allows students to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for non-college degree programs such as: on-the-job training, flight (for other than a private pilot

license) at flight schools, apprenticeship training, and correspondence courses

- Flight programs: Pays the lesser of actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,000, whichever is less "per academic year"
- Housing allowance is now payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled solely in distance learning, the housing allowance is half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents (the full time rate would be \$673.50 for 2011)
- Prorates housing allowance by rate of pursuit (rounded to the nearest tenth)
- A three-quarter-time student would receive 80 percent of the BAH rate
- Allow students on active duty to receive a books and supplies stipend

## **CAREER & EDUCATION: Opportunity for Women Veterans**

Women Veterans Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) is a training program in entrepreneurship and small business management, offered by the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University in cooperation with the U.S. Small Business Administration. The program is open to all women Veterans interested in learning about entrepreneurship and starting, running or growing a business. Participants may be from any branch of the military and any era of service. V-WISE is a three-phase program:

- Phase 1—35-day online, self-study course
- Phase 2—Three-day conference
- Phase 3—Ongoing support and mentorship

Upcoming conferences will be in San Antonio, TX (May 2011), Baltimore, MD (September 2011), Tampa, FL (spring 2012), San Diego, CA (fall 2012), Kansas City, MS (spring 2013), and Seattle, WA (fall 2013). For more information, visit <http://whitman.syr.edu/vwise/index.asp>. As a reminder, AW2 does not endorse any school, college, university, or any educational or training program, but provides this information as an opportunity for personal growth and career development.

*(SOURCE: V-Wise brochure)*

## **FAMILY: Program Resources for Warriors and Families**

The inTransition program launched six public service announcements (PSAs) to educate servicemembers, Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, health care providers, and Family members about its coaching resources. The PSAs provide an overview of what the inTransition program can provide to each audience and how to contact the program for more information:

- "Maze"—Explains how servicemembers can navigate the switch to a new mental health care provider when experiencing a change in status
- "Insights-Providers"—Addresses the important role of healthcare providers as they help servicemembers maintain continuity of care when they encounter a change in status
- "Insights-Family Members"—Discusses, from the Family member perspective, how inTransition helped loved ones maintain their mental health care treatment during changes in status

To view the newly-released public service announcements, visit <http://www.health.mil/intransition/PSA.aspx>. For more information on the inTransition program, please visit [www.health.mil/inTransition](http://www.health.mil/inTransition) or call its confidential, toll-free number at (800) 424-7877.

*(SOURCE: inTransition article)*



## **FAMILY: Good Links/ App to Know**

We wanted to make you aware of two Facebook pages and a mobile app for programs related to wounded warrior support.

- Facebook page for Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy: <http://facebook.com/WarriorCare>
- Facebook page for National Resource Directory (<http://www.NRD.gov>), a government Web portal of government and community resources for wounded warriors and Veterans: <http://facebook.com/NationalResourceDirectory>
- Stay connected on the go with the new mobile version of the National Resource Directory (NRD). Simply enter NRD.gov in the browser of any mobile device for immediate access to information on benefits and compensation, employment, education, housing, and much more.

## **FAMILY: Boosting Family Resilience**

Just as servicemembers can build resilience, Families can also take steps to boost their resilience or "Family fitness." Family fitness is every military Family's ability to use physical, psychological, social, and spiritual resources to prepare for, adapt to, and grow from military lifestyle demands. Feeling more secure and connected in daily life can help Families build resilience to cope with common military stressors like deployment, permanent change of station, combat injury, and operational stress. For more information visit

<http://www.realwarriors.net/family/change/familyresilience.php>.

(SOURCE: Real Warriors website)

## **SME EXPLAINS: Realignment of Walter Reed Army Medical Center**

***By BG Steve Jones, Deputy Commander, Joint Task Force National Capital Region Medical***

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommended the closure of Walter Reed Army Medical Center by September 15, 2011. The staff and functions are being realigned to new world-class facilities at Bethesda and Fort Belvoir. Joint Task Force National Capital Region Medical (JTF CapMed) was established to implement this BRAC recommendation and ensure the delivery of world-class health care in the National Capital Region. The National Naval Medical Center is undergoing \$1.5 billion in new construction and renovation and will be renamed the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Bethesda. A new Fort Belvoir Community Hospital is being constructed at a cost of \$1.2 billion. When completed, it will be the leading example of evidence-based hospital design in the nation.

All the clinical care, support and programs for wounded warriors that exist at Walter Reed today will be provided in the new facilities. Each will have a new Warrior Complex to house patients, non-medical attendants and Warrior Transition Unit staff. The Amputee Center that now operates at Walter Reed will be even larger. The National Intrepid Center of Excellence for Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health will reach its full capacity in March 2011. Servicemembers and their Families will remain the first priority for JTF CapMed.

For more information visit <http://capmed.mil/> and follow JTF CapMed on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/jtfcapmed>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/jtfcapmed>). JTF CapMed just redesigned *The Voice* newsletter, April's issue is available at <http://capmed.mil/newsletters/JTF-CAPMED-Voice-2011-April.pdf>.

# **AW2 COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK: TGIT—Thank Goodness it's Thursday Meditation Hour**

***By Patty Sands, WTC Stratcom***

Thank Goodness it's Thursday Meditation Hour is launching for AW2 spouses and caregivers on Thursday, May 26, at 1 p.m. ET. This teleconference meditation time will be a regularly scheduled event that will assist in helping to relieve stress and assist caregivers and spouses in finding new coping skills. It is scheduled for the last Thursday of every month. AW2 Community Support Network member, Warriors at Ease founder Robin Carnes will lead iRestR—an easy to learn meditation technique. Carnes teaches this technique at Walter Reed and has had great success. For example, her students report sleeping more soundly and better, having less pain, and generally feeling more peace of mind in daily life after using these techniques.

Do you know of an AW2 spouse or caregiver that would benefit from stress reduction? Email [AW2communitysupportnetwork@conus.army.mil](mailto:AW2communitysupportnetwork@conus.army.mil) for more information or to reserve a spot on this call. For more information on AW2 Community Support Network member Warriors at Ease, visit <http://www.warriorsatease.com/>. As a reminder, AW2 does not endorse organizations, but provides this information as an opportunity.

Do you know of a caring organization that wants to assist wounded warriors and their Families? If so, forward them this link:

[http://wtc.army.mil/aw2/community\\_support/index.html](http://wtc.army.mil/aw2/community_support/index.html). This page describes the program and lists the supporters. If they wish to register, the form can be downloaded. All they need to do is fill it out and fax it to (571) 256-3339. For questions or problems, please contact the AW2 Community Support Network at [AW2communitysupportnetwork@conus.army.mil](mailto:AW2communitysupportnetwork@conus.army.mil).

## **BENEFITS: Filing Claims for Disability Compensation Prior to Separation or Retirement**

The Pre-Discharge Program is a joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DOD) program that affords servicemembers the opportunity to file claims for disability compensation up to 180 days prior to separation or retirement from active duty or full time National Guard or Reserve duty (Titles 10 and 32). A servicemember must have a discharge date already established to apply through the Pre-Discharge Program. The four components of the Pre-Discharge Program are:

- Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program—Servicemember can apply between 60-180 days prior to discharge
- Quick Start—Servicemember can apply if they have less than 60 days remaining on active duty
- Disability Evaluation System (pilot program)—Combined DOD/VA evaluation for Medical Evaluation Board (MEB)
- Seriously Injured/Very Seriously Injured (SI/VSII)

The VA has made it easier to file a Pre-Discharge claim. A servicemember can complete the new two-page VA Form 526c, Pre-Discharge Compensation Claim, and submit it with their service treatment records (originals or copies) to the VA location nearest to them. This form is used to file a BDD Claim or a Quick Start

Claim only. While in the Pre-Discharge Program, members may also apply for other VA benefits, such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Education, and Loan Guaranty. BDD and Quick Start are available nationwide and open to all servicemembers on full time, active duty to include members of the National Guard and Reserves. The process can begin at a military installation/intake site or VA Regional Office. Two overseas military installations have processes in place to accept BDD claims: South Korea and Germany. For additional information, visit <http://www.vba.va.gov>.

(SOURCE: VA website, <http://www.vba.va.gov/predischarge/>)

## **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 [warriorcarecommunications@conus.army.mil](mailto:warriorcarecommunications@conus.army.mil).

## **THE BLOG UPDATE: April 2011**

### **Warrior Games Marksman Hunts for Gold**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/warrior-games-marksman-hunts-for-gold/>

### **We Rode Hard, Met the Challenge**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/we-rode-hard-met-the-challenge/>

### **Ride to Win**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/ride-to-win/>

### **Swimming Competitor Prepares for Upcoming Warrior Games**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/swimming-competitor-prepares-for-upcoming-warrior-games/>

### **I'm Just Competitive as Hell**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/20/i%e2%80%99m-just-competitive-as-hell/>

### **Counseling Awareness**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/20/counseling-awareness/>

### **Building the AW2 Community on Facebook Starts With You**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/19/building-the-aw2-community-on-facebook-starts-with-you/>

### **Case Management—Where it All Comes Together**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/case-management%e2%80%94where-it-all-comes-together/>

### **AW2 Symposium—Kids Serve Too!**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/14/aw2-symposium%e2%80%93kids-serve-too/>

### **Motivated, Dedicated, and Inspired by Physical Fitness**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/13/motivated-dedicated-and-inspired-by-physical-fitness/>

### **Wounded Warrior Town Hall at Walter Reed**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/wounded-warrior-town-hall-at-walter-reed/>



**Resiliency and How Local Organizations Can Support Wounded Warriors**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/08/resiliency-and-how-local-organizations-can-support-wounded-warriors/>

**Driving Change Through the Business of Army Medicine**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/driving-change-through-the-business-of-army-medicine/>

**Welcome to the AW2 Community Support Network**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/07/welcome-to-the-aw2-community-support-network-4/>

**Army Warrior Games Sitting Volleyball Team Hones Skills at San Antonio Clinic**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/army-warrior-games-sitting-volleyball-team-hones-skills-at-san-antonio-clinic/>

**Sitting Volleyball Warrior Games Athletes Train in San Antonio**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/sitting-volleyball-warrior-games-athletes-train-in-san-antonio/>

**Wounded Warrior Career Decision Toolkit**

<http://wtc.armylive.dodlive.mil/2011/04/wounded-warrior-career-decision-toolkit/>

**The USO's Selfless Leadership**

<http://aw2.armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/04/01/the-uso%e2%80%99s-selfless-leadership/>

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U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)

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