

USAWOA AMM 2006  
CW4 (Ret) Percy Butler, Assistant Vice President for Veterans Affairs

Dear Members, it continues to be a great pleasure to serve you in the area of Veterans Affairs. During the year, we have endeavored to report on those matters that would enhance the lives of our military members and their families; we sincerely hope that the information has proven to be helpful. I would also like to thank the Home Office for their efforts to collect and provide me with timely and helpful information.

Our nation continues to be engaged in conflicts and disasters inside and outside our borders, please continue to be benevolent in support of the many charities tasked with assisting those impacted; our service organizations deserve our support as they support the troops and their families. We continue to be involved in hostile activities on several fronts and we continue to create casualties within our forces their families need and deserve our support at all cost.

We also continue to have families devastated by Katrina and other hurricanes that have a need for massive amount of assistance and monetary help. These are our people whom we swore to support and defend, please continue to exercise care and concern as you may encounter someone in need of a kind word of encouragement or seeking guidance in obtaining needed services.

I continue to be concerned by the delay in benefits due our military members and their families, the long delays should not exist and the Veterans Administration should continue to ramp up its processing and evaluation of claims for the servicemembers and/or their survivors. There are some efforts to improve these services and to secure our personal data. Our Association has continued to focus and monitor matters relating to the approval/award process of VA Benefits and I will continue to make myself available to a conference with VACO Benefits base on first hand experience with the VA.

As many of you may know, action is underway to finally pay the back pay authorized to some of you that are entitled to Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC). This applies only to those that are in receipt of VA Benefits awarded after retirement or separated prior to completing over 20 years of service. Those that were retired by their respective branch of service with more than 20 years of active duty (length of service) and were medically retired by that service are not entitled to receive Combat Related/Concurrent Receipt until approximately 2014.

Here is a ruling that I received concerning my own case whereby an award of 40% for combat related disease/injury was approved retroactively to August 2005; however, a guideline for payment from DFAS refused to pay the entitlement of \$572 based on Method A (Chapter 61) Disability Retirement CRSC **REDUCTION**: “ Ther CRSC payment will be reduced by the amount by which a member’s Method A disability pay exceeds the amount of Method B retired pay. The CRSC payment cannot exceed pay entitled based on years of service (Method B). Clarification for this guidance was implemented June 1, 2004.” Over a 20 year period, this represent an annual loss of \$6864 or over a 20 year life expectancy \$137,280 to my family. Remember this applies only to those of us medically retired after 20 YOS (voluntary or involuntary).

Due to family considerations, I did not get an opportunity to discuss this issue one on one with the National President during his recent visit to Atlanta nor through telephone attempts, however, hopefully it can be discussed during the AMM.

In recent months, you may not have noticed the publication of articles in the Newsliner because the Home Office has done a tremendous job in extracting breaking news that is available to them, thanks for a job well done. In lieu of articles, I have had the privilege of visiting chapters within the Southeast Region upon their request and it has been grand to do so.

Again, it has been a great please to serve you and the Association and should the President desire I am willing to continue to serve the CORPS.