

Honoring U.S. Veterans – Both Past and Present Identifying Veterans' Benefits and Financial Considerations

Memorial Day is just around the corner—a day observed to commemorate the men and women who gave their lives in military service. While honoring those that made the ultimate sacrifice is incredibly important and patriotic, at Cloud Investments, Inc., we believe it is equally important to honor and assist those veterans that have given so much for this country and lived. Many veterans suffer from ongoing physical, emotional and financial struggles as a result of their service, and often they, and their families, are unaware of the number of federal assistance programs available to them.

Aid and Attendance Pension (A&A)

Perhaps one of the most significant and lesser-known benefits for veterans and their surviving spouses is the Aid and Attendance Pension, or A&A. The A&A benefit was designed to provide for non-medical care needed for veterans to continue living safely and independently, whether that be services for in-home care, assisted living or a nursing home facility. These benefits are *in addition* to monthly pension benefits for eligible veterans or surviving spouses. This can potentially become a significant source of financial aid for long-term care services; unfortunately, it is largely underutilized, as many veterans are unaware that this program exists. According to a study from the VA, more than \$22 billion in pension funds are available for nearly 2 million eligible veterans and widows that are missing out on these benefits, including fewer than one in seven eligible spouses. To learn more about your eligibility and applying for A&A benefits, visit www.benefits.VA.gov.

Additional Veterans' Benefits and Financial Considerations

Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act (HEROES ACT): Passed in 2003, The HEROES Act was created to ensure that service members receiving financial aid for school are not financially penalized for their military status. The Heroes Act provides financial flexibility and assistance to students in the military affected by deployment in times of war or emergency.

Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act (HEART): Passed in 2008, this legislation creates additional provisions for death, disability, tax and pension benefits required of an employer when an employee is called into active military duty. This includes maintaining coverage of any company death and disability benefits and maintaining differential wage payment to continue paying any gap in income between standard company pay and military income while deployed in service.

This country is truly the home of the free and the brave, and it is because of the sacrifices made by many courageous men and woman. Without their discipline to serve and commitment to protecting and preserving our way of life, this country would not be what it is today.

At Cloud Investments, Inc., we believe in our American heroes. This Memorial Day, we hope you will join us in paying tribute to those who served and gave their lives, as well as our brave veterans. The government has rightfully extended enhanced benefits to the veterans of this country; let us help spread the word. If you know a veteran that could benefit from any of these programs, we hope you will share this information with them. If we can be of any further assistance in understanding your benefits, planning for Long Term Care, education or retirement planning needs, please give Cloud Investments a call at (256) 715-0094.

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