

Vets To Get Bigger Pension Checks In July

More than 300,000 veterans and their survivors will be getting larger Veterans Administration pension checks on July 1 — the result of a 14.3 per cent increase in the government's cost of living index.

Some 2.4 million VA pensioners are affected in some way by the cost of living index.

Pensions are paid to veterans totally and permanently disabled from circumstances unrelated to their military service. They are paid also to survivors of veterans who are in need. Unlike compensation paid to those disabled because of military service, pensions are affected by income from other sources.

The 300,000 who will get increases this month (payable July 1) are those who have switched to the "improved" VA pension plan inaugurated by Congress in 1979. The plan links VA pension rates to adjustments in social security payments. Before the change, an individual's pension was subject to reduction each time social security increased.

Those pensioners who chose to stay under the pension rules in effect before 1979 will not

receive the July 1 increase. They will, however, avoid the reduction in pension that the social security increase would have triggered before the legislation went into effect. For these pensioners, the 14.3 per cent social security increase triggered a similar increase in the maximum amount of income they could receive from other sources and still remain eligible for VA pension.

Pensions for veterans and survivors under the "old plan" remain fixed and payable at the rates in effect in 1978. But those rates are protected against reduction that would otherwise result from cost of living increase in their income from other sources.

"Old plan" recipients may request transfer to the "improved" plan at any time, VA officials point out. The agency will carefully review each application to advise applicants to choose the plan which works to their personal advantage.

With the June increase (payable in July 1 checks), a veteran with one dependent and no other income will receive \$5,844. For each additional dependent, the added amount is \$755 per year.

ESC Agrees To Cover Blind Employees

RALEIGH — The Employment Security Commission ruled June 17 that regular, non-supervisory workers at Industries of the Blind, Inc., in Greensboro, are not mandated under the law to be covered for unemployment insurance and at the same time agreed to cover these exempt employees should the company make a request for voluntary coverage.

The decision, reached after a thorough investigation and public hearing by the commission (on June 6 in Greensboro), apparently ends a controversy that arose late last year when sixteen workers were laid off because of suspension of a government contract for the manufacture of ball point pens. Four supervisors had been covered by unemployment insurance and were eligible for benefits, while the blind workers were not.

Upon signing the opinion, Employment Security Commission Chairman J.B. Archer said: "With respect to voluntary coverage of these exempt employees, it is our con-

clusion that those handicapped people who are taking training in this establishment definitely cannot be covered for unemployment insurance. We find, however, that the record is inconclusive as to whether the trained people who work in this establishment could or could not work in competitive employment. There is some question about their labor market attachment, but we will approve a voluntary election request, upon receipt, to cover these workers for unemployment insurance purposes, effective January 1, 1980."

This means, according to a Commission spokesman, that should W.W. Hudson, general manager of Industries of the Blind, formally apply for voluntary coverage of the exempt employees in question, they will be treated as other employees with respect to unemployment insurance.

"I am pleased that we are now able to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion of the affected workers," said Archer.

Leffall Named To National Cancer Advisory Board

WASHINGTON, DC — LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., M.D., professor and chairman, Department of Surgery, Howard University College of Medicine and Immediate Past National president of the American Cancer Society has been appointed by President Carter to a six-year term on the National Cancer Advisory Board.

Established under the "National Cancer Act of 1971", the Advisory Board is composed of 23 members, eighteen of whom are appointed by the President. Members advise and assist the director of the National Cancer Institute in administering the National Cancer Program.

Dr. Leffall is an internationally renowned surgeon and lecturer. He has been a member of numerous American Cancer Society delegations including those visiting the Dominican Republic, the Soviet

Union, the People's Republic of China, and several African, South American, and European countries. He has lectured at some 54 universities in the United States and abroad and has held the position of surgical lecturer at Georgetown University since 1970. He is a consultant to Walter Reed Army Hospital and the National Cancer Institute.

Dr. Leffall is the author or co-author of 65 scientific papers. In 1972, he presented the historic Howard University study, "The Alarming Increase of Cancer Mortality in the U.S. Black Population". While president of the American Cancer Society, Inc. from 1978-1979, Dr. Leffall initiated the first National Conference on "Meeting the Challenge of Cancer Among Black Americans", a conference which has led to greater awareness of cancer among minority populations.

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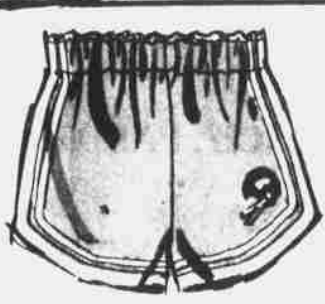
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