Notes for War Pensioners and War Widows or Widower pensioners going abroad
This leaflet is for war pensioners thinking of going abroad. It covers payment of pensions and medical expenses and how to get help or advice while you are there.

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The War Pensions Scheme is administered by Veterans UK. This leaflet gives you general guidance, but it is not a full statement of the law. Please remember that the law may change from time to time. This may affect your rights and responsibilities, including whether you are likely to get a pension, how much you will get, and when you will get it. If you need more advice about anything to do with war pensions, call Veterans UK Helpline on: 0808 1914 2 18.

For more information on our helpline and other ways to contact us please go to page 7.
Your pension while you are abroad

If you are going to Northern Ireland, we can pay your pension into your usual account. If you are going to the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands you can contact us on 0808 1914 2 18 to discuss how we can pay your pension.

Going abroad for less than 12 months

• we can pay your pension into your usual UK account;
• we can arrange to have your pension paid into an account wherever you live, or
• we can save your pension for you, for up to 12 months, then we will have to pay it direct to your bank, building society or other account provider.

We can usually carry on paying war pensions and allowances anywhere in the world, but if you get a supplementary allowance, like an Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation Rent Allowance, it may change or stop if you go abroad permanently.

Overseas Pensions Agents (OPA), Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA)

These services are available in Australia, USA, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa to help war pensioners, war widows and war widowers get free and confidential advice about war pensions. If you live in one of these countries and are not sure how to contact your OPA or DVA, please call the Veterans UK Helpline on + 44 1253 866043.
Staying abroad permanently – Payment while you are abroad

If you decide to go abroad for more than 3 months please tell us. We will tell you the address of the Overseas Pensions Agent if you are moving to a country that has one, and how we will pay your pension.

Payment can continue to be made into your UK bank account. If you wish, payment may be made directly into an overseas bank account. Payment will be made in £ sterling and converted into local currency by the receiving bank using the exchange rate appropriate at the time.

There are some countries that do not have the facility to accept direct payments into bank accounts. If you live in one of these countries, please tell us and we will make alternative arrangements. Please check your bank statements regularly and tell us straightaway if you think you have not been paid or we have paid you the wrong amount.

About payment changes Increases in War Pensions

War Pension normally goes up every April. We use the UK Consumer Price Index to work out how much they should go up by. We will write to you and tell you when the amount we pay you is going to change.

Exchange rates

We cannot pay you extra if changes in the exchange rate affect the way your war pension is converted from sterling into your local currency.
Medical treatment abroad

As the NHS is a residence based healthcare system, if you live abroad or go to live abroad, the NHS ceases to have responsibility for healthcare costs under UK law.

For more information about overseas healthcare issues contact: Overseas Healthcare Team

Overseas Healthcare Services
NHSBSA
Bridge House
152 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6SN
Tel: +44 191 218 1999
Email: nhsbsa.ohsregistrations@nhs.net

As there is no NHS overseas, Veterans UK may meet the cost of treatment for your accepted war pension condition(s) provided the treatment is:

- Clinically necessary for a disability due to service.
- not available free of charge through the health system in the country of residence.

Treatment may include surgery, dental treatment, glasses, aids, appliances and medication. Travelling expenses may also be payable if hospital treatment is needed for your accepted war pension condition(s).

If you live in Australia, USA, Canada, New Zealand or South Africa, contact your Overseas Pension Agent or Department of Veterans Affairs before arranging any treatment.
Medical treatment abroad (continued).

If you live in any other country, you should contact Veterans UK directly for approval of your treatment. If you do not, you may not be able to claim back the cost of any treatment.

Appliances

If you have an artificial limb, surgical shoes, hearing aid or any other appliance that you need because of your accepted condition(s), you should tell your Appliance Centre or Disablement Service Centre so that they can check it before you go.

If you have a spare artificial limb you must take it with you. If you are travelling by air ask the airline for the cheapest way of taking it, but if you have to pay more send us the receipt for the extra cost and we will pay you the money back.

If you need a repair while you are away, we will normally pay for it. If you live in Australia, USA, Canada, New Zealand or South Africa, contact your OPA and they will tell you how to get the repair done.

If you are staying in a country with no OPA, you can get the repair done yourself and send us the account with a note saying what happened.
Returning to the UK

If you decide to return to the UK

If the Overseas Pension Agent pays your pension and you decide to come back to the UK, you must tell the Agent, so that they can transfer your pension back to us.

If we are paying your war pension tell us as soon as you can. We need to know the date you are coming back to the UK, your new address and your new account details if appropriate. Do this as soon as you can so that you won’t be kept waiting for your pension when you come back.
Where to get help and advice

Veterans Helpline

The Veterans Helpline number (UK only) is 0808 1914 2 18. If you are overseas, telephone + 44 1 253 866043. The Veterans UK Helpline is open: 8:00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

The staff can give you general advice and can also help you to fill in any forms.

If you have problems with your hearing and you have a textphone, you can phone the Helpline (UK only) on 0800 169 34 58.

We may monitor your phone calls to us to help ensure we maintain our high standards of customer service and to train our staff.

You can write to us at: Veterans UK Norcross Thornton-Cleveleys FY5 3WP England

You can contact us by E-mail at: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

You can find us on the Internet at: www.gov.uk/veterans-uk
Our service to you

We aim to provide a high-quality service and to treat everyone equally.

We are always trying to improve the service that we give you. To help us give you a better service, we have a Customer Service Manager.

If you want to tell us anything about our service, please write to:
Customer Service Manager
Veterans UK Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys
FY5 3WP
England

You can contact us by E-mail at: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

Or you can phone our Helpline (UK only) on 0808 1914 2 18 and ask for the Customer Service Manager.

If you live overseas, phone + 44 1253 866043.
How the MOD collects and uses personal information

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information and ensuring that all your personal data is processed in accordance with UK data protection legislation. The MOD Personal Information Charter contains the standards you can expect when we ask for, hold or share your personal information and your rights under the UK data protection legislation. You can view the Personal Information Charter on the internet https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/personal-information-charter

Further information can be found on the internet on the way the Veterans UK processes your data in line with the charter. You can view by visiting https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-business-services-privacy-notice

Alternatively, we can send you a copy if you ask us to. Our contact details are on page 7.
How to make an FOI request

You can read about the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and how to make a request on the internet https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request

To make a new request, contact us at:

Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulation requests
MOD Information Rights Team
Ground floor, zone D
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Email cio-foi@mod.uk

Please note: Not to be used for requesting your own information (Subject Access Request), Service records including for deceased relatives, or pension enquiries.

When making a request make sure you include
• your name and a contact address
• a detailed description of the information you want - for example, you might want all information held on a subject, or just a summary