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Financial *Focus*

A Monthly Insight Into Your Finances

May 2017

HAPPY *Memorial* DAY

Memorial Day Trivia ¹

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1. Even though numerous communities had been independently celebrating Memorial Day for years, the federal government declared Waterloo, N.Y. the official birthplace of Memorial Day. Waterloo first celebrated the holiday on May 5, 1866.
 2. Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30 for decades, but in 1971, Congress established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May and a federal holiday.
 3. Memorial Day originally honored military personnel who died in the Civil War (1861-1865).
 4. Red poppies are known as a symbol of remembrance, and it's a tradition to wear them to honor those who died in war.
 5. It wasn't always Memorial Day — it used to be known as Decoration Day.
 6. President Bill Clinton signed the National Moment of Remembrance Act on Dec. 28, 2000, designating 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day as a National Moment of Remembrance.

After the Military: Tips for Your Financial Transition to Civilian Life ²

We would like to begin by thanking you for your service!

A drawdown is looming. You're separating at the end of active service. You've decided to retire after a long career. No matter why you're leaving the military, a big part of preparing for your civilian life is taking steps to proactively address the financial issues you might face. Here are some tips to help ease the transition.

Get your road map ready

An impending separation from service may be both exciting and anxiety-provoking for you and your family. Your lifestyle, income sources, and benefits will be changing. Major decisions that may affect your finances include:

- Where you decide to live
- Whether you'll be selling or purchasing a home
- Whether you and/or your spouse will need to find new employment
- Your plans to return to school
- Your eligibility for benefits (e.g., from the military or a future employer)

To help you prepare for your transition to civilian life, the Department of Defense, along with other agencies, has developed a program called Transition GPS. All servicemembers who are retiring, separating, or being released from a period of at least 180 days of active duty must participate in this program. Transition GPS includes pre-separation counseling, briefings, and workshops that cover topics such as education and training, employment and career goals, financial management, and VA benefits. You'll also prepare an Individual Transition Plan. For more information, visit the DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP) website at www.dodtap.mil.

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After the Military: Tips for Your Financial Transition to Civilian Life Continued...

Save for transition expenses

Some of your costs will be covered through transition assistance (for example, storage and shipment of household goods), but it's likely that you'll have expenses for which you won't be reimbursed, such as housing deposits. Having some savings set aside in a transition fund that you can easily access may help you avoid having to dip into your long-term savings and investments to cover unexpected expenses. It will also decrease the odds that you'll rack up credit-card debt that you'll have to pay off down the road.

Before Leaving the Military

Housing	Determine how much you can afford to pay for housing, and contact a local real estate agent who can show you properties available to rent or buy. Visit and evaluate the area where you'd like to move.
Health Care	Schedule medical and dental appointments, and review and copy your records. Learn about your post-separation or retirement health insurance options and determine whether you'll need transitional insurance.
Life Insurance	Review your life insurance needs. Decide whether it's cost-effective to convert your SGLI policy to VGLI, or whether you should purchase an individual policy. If you have FSGLI coverage for your spouse, remember that it's not convertible to VGLI, so look at options for replacing your spouse's coverage.
Estate Planning	Update your estate plan, including your will, powers of attorney, and other documents to reflect your new situation.
Retirement Planning	Decide what to do with your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account, if you've contributed. If you're seeking employment in the civilian sector, learn about any new options for retirement savings, such as contributing to a tax-deferred employer sponsored retirement plan. If you're retiring, consider how your military retirement pay fits into your overall retirement income plan.
Education Planning	Make sure you understand your education benefits that can help you pay for college or vocational training. Consider transferring Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to dependents. While you're still on active duty, take tests that can help you earn college credit or a license or certification, and find out whether any of your military training may be substituted for college credit.
Career Planning	Attend relevant employment workshops and counseling. Attend job fairs and network with potential employers and recruiters. Military spouses can connect with the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) program for career planning help at www.militaryonesource.mil/seco .

*Don't wait until the last minute. Make saving for your transition a priority, and start as far ahead of time as possible to ensure that you have several months of savings set aside to cover transition expenses. **For income planning assistance call Craig Colley at (949) 216-8459.***

Review and revisit

After your transition is complete and your income and expenses have stabilized, update your budget to reflect your new circumstances. It's also a good time to review your income goals. Now that your focus has shifted from your short-term priorities, you can refocus on pursuing your long-term goals to prepare for your next stage in life.

Quote of the Month ³

“A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.”

Joseph Campbell

The term “hero” is thrown around more often than it actually should be, but you will know a real hero when you see one. They are people who do something for the greater good in an unselfish act.



10 ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR SPRING ⁴

Many of us spend a great deal of money keeping our homes cool and comfortable in the summer, so in order to help we've compiled a list of 10 simple spring tips to help you save money in preparation for the dog days of summer.

1. Wash or replace furnace and air conditioner filters. A clean filter affords better air flow, providing more comfort while lowering your electric bill.

2. Install ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent or LED light bulbs in your most-used fixtures and lamps. Fluorescent and LED bulbs put out less heat, plus you'll save \$30 to \$40 in energy costs over the life of each bulb.

3. Check your heating and cooling system to make sure it is operating at peak efficiency. Call in an HVAC expert for a clean and tune up.

4. Consider taking advantage of warmer days to line dry your laundry outside.

5. Use natural lighting as much as possible. If you have lights on a timer, adjust the settings to take advantage of longer daylight making sure they are only on when needed.

6. If you have a sliding glass door make sure to keep its track clean. A dirty track can ruin the door's seal and create gaps where heat or cold air can escape.

7. Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to save money on your electricity bill. If you have children in the house, this is also a safety measure.

8. Replacing your old central air conditioner with a new ENERGY STAR qualified model can reduce your cooling costs by 20 percent.

9. Clean out the lint trapped in the dryer found outside your house and don't forget to clean the lint from the dryer hose itself.

10. Clean your refrigerator coils. Cleaning the coils allows your fridge to work more efficiently, using less electricity and prolonging its life.

How to Celebrate Memorial Day for Under \$30 ⁵

Host a Potluck

Instead of footing the bill for an entire barbecue, which can easily blow a \$30 budget, have everyone bring something, including meats for the grill, side dishes, drinks and dessert

Visit a National Cemetery

Get a grasp on what the holiday is really about by visiting the military burial sites near you. The U.S maintains 134 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers lots and monument sites.

Have Fun at the Park

Be more active this Memorial Day weekend by taking the family to a park for some fun — and free — activities. Load up the picnic basket and grab a blanket — and don't forget to bring a kite, frisbee, or a soccer ball to keep everyone active and having fun outdoors.



Go to a Parade

If you can't make it to major event, such as the National Memorial Day parade in the District of Columbia, check for parades scheduled in your area. Otherwise, you can sit back and watch one of the big events online or on TV from home.

1. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/05/22/historical-facts-memorial-day/27817017/>

2. Broadridge Investor Communication Solutions, Inc. Copyright 2017 (documentation available upon request)

3. <https://www.babble.com/mom/15-powerful-quotes-of-war-in-honor-of-memorial-day/>

4. <http://www.ccicenter.org/ViewArticle/tabid/109/ArticleId/40/Energy-Saving-Tips-For-The-Spring.aspx>

5. <https://www.gobankingrates.com/personal-finance/celebrate-memorial-day/>

6. <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/red-velvet-blueberry-ice-cream-pie-recipe>

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New Website & Resource Center



By visiting our new website you will find information regarding social security benefits, Medicare health plans, long term care, risk assessments and how to leverage technology in retirement. Be sure to check out the Free Guides, reports, videos and risk assessment tools available to help you navigate through the unpredictable waters of retirement. To stay updated subscribe to my blogs and posts on social media.

Red Velvet Blueberry Ice Cream Pie[®]

Ingredients

- 4 store-bought red velvet cupcakes
- 1 1/2 pints vanilla ice cream
- 1 1/2 pints blueberry sorbet
- 2 cups cold heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar



Directions

Scrape off and discard the frosting from the cupcakes; crumble the cupcakes into crumbs. Press all but 1/4 cup crumbs into the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate. Freeze 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, let the ice cream and sorbet soften at room temperature, about 15 minutes. Spread the ice cream evenly over the crust using an offset spatula or rubber spatula; spread the sorbet on top. (Return the pie to the freezer between layers if the ice cream gets too soft.) Freeze while you make the whipped cream.

Beat the heavy cream and confectioners' sugar in a large bowl with a mixer on medium-high speed until soft peaks form, about 3 minutes. Top the pie with the whipped cream and sprinkle the reserved cupcake crumbs around the edge. Freeze until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight.

Upcoming Events



FREE WORKSHOP
Social Security | Medicare
TO REGISTER CALL
(949) 216-8459
www.coliday.com

DATE:
Wednesday - May 17th
6:30-7:30pm

LOCATION:
Sea Country Senior & Community Center
24602 Aliso Creek Rd, Laguna Niguel, CA
92677