

existence, other Federal Agencies are required to use interest rates computed under the criteria established by the Renegotiation Act of 1971 Sec. 2, Pub. L. 92-41, 85 Stat. 97.

For example, the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 Sec. 12, Pub. L. 95-563, 92 Stat. 2389 and the Prompt Payment Act of 1982 Sec. 2, Pub. L. 97-177, 96 Stat. 85 provide for the calculation of interest due on claims at a rate established by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3902(a).

Therefore, notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the above mentioned sections, the Secretary of the Treasury has determined that the rate of interest applicable for the purpose of said sections, for the period beginning January 1, 1999 and ending on June 30, 1999, is five per centum per annum.

Dated: December 22, 1998.

**Donald V. Hammond,**

*Fiscal Assistant Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-34492 Filed 12-30-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-39-P

## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations: "From Botany to Bouquets: Flowers in Northern Art"

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985, 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978 (43 FR 13359, March 29, 1978), and Delegation Order No. 85-5 of June 27, 1985 (50 FR 27393, July 2, 1985). I hereby determine that the objects to be included in the exhibit, "From Botany to Bouquets: Flowers in Northern Art," imported from abroad for the temporary exhibition without profit within the United States, are of cultural significance. These objects are imported pursuant to loan agreements with foreign lenders. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the exhibit objects at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC from January 31, 1999 to May 31, 1999. Is in the national interest. Public Notice of these Determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For a copy of the list of exhibit objects or for further information, contact Nelia Sheahan, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, 202/619-5030, and the address is Room 700, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547-0001.

Dated: December 23, 1998.

**Les Jin,**

*General Counsel.*

[FR Doc. 98-34555 Filed 12-30-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Headstone or Marker Allowance Rate

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As required by law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is hereby giving notice of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in certain benefit rates and income limitations. These COLAs affect the pension, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), and spina bifida programs. These adjustments are based on the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the one year period ending September 30, 1998. VA is also giving notice of the maximum amount of reimbursement that may be paid for headstones or markers purchased in lieu of Government-furnished headstone or markers in Fiscal Year 1999, which began on October 1, 1998.

**DATES:** These COLAs are effective December 1, 1998. The headstone or marker allowance rate is effective October 1, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul Trowbridge, Consultant, Compensation and Pension Service (213B), Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-7218.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under 38 U.S.C. 2306(d), VA may provide reimbursement for the cost of non-Government headstone or markers at a rate equal to the actual cost of the average actual cost of Government-furnished headstone or markers during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year

in which the non-Government headstone or marker was purchased, whichever is less.

Section 8041 of Pub. L. 101-508 amended 38 U.S.C. 2306(d) to eliminate the payment of the monetary allowance in lieu of VA-provided headstone or marker for deaths occurring on or after November 1, 1990. However, in a precedent opinion (O. G. C. Prec. 17-90), VA's General Counsel held that there is no limitation period applicable to claims for benefits under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 2306(d).

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers during any fiscal year is determined by dividing the sum of VA costs during that fiscal year for procurement, transportation, and miscellaneous administration, inspection and support staff by the total number of headstones and markers procured by VA during that fiscal year and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount.

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers for Fiscal Year 1998 under the above computation method was \$96. Therefore, effective October 1, 1998, the maximum rate of reimbursement for non-Government headstones or markers purchased during Fiscal Year 1999 is \$96.

### Cost of Living Adjustments

Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312 and section 306 of Pub. L. 95-588, VA is required to increase the benefit rates and income limitations in the pension and parents' DIC programs by the same percentage, and effective the same date, as increases in the benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act. The increased rates and income limitations are also required to be published in the **Federal Register**.

The Social Security Administration has announced that there will be a 1.3 percent cost-of-living increase in Social Security benefits effective December 1, 1998. Therefore, applying the same percentage and rounding up in accordance with 38 CFR 3.29, the following increased rates and income limitations for the VA pension and parents' DIC programs will be effective December 1, 1998:

TABLE 1.—IMPROVED PENSION

Maximum annual rates

(1) Veterans permanently and totally disabled (38 U.S.C. 1521):

Veteran with no dependents, \$8,778

Veteran with one dependent, \$11,497