Good Morning/ Afternoon Veteran,

Thanks for reaching out with your questions about your military retirement pay and how it works alongside VA disability compensation. This can be a confusing area, but I’m here to help clear things up and make sure you’re receiving every benefit you’re entitled to.

Let me break down the key pieces for you:

If you’re receiving **military retirement pay** and you’ve also been awarded **VA disability compensation**, the rules can vary based on your **VA rating** and whether your disability is considered **combat-related**.

In most cases, military retirees can’t receive both full retirement pay and full VA disability pay at the same time—**unless** they qualify for one of the following programs:

**CRDP – Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay**

* **What it is:** CRDP allows certain military retirees to receive **both** military retirement pay and VA disability compensation **without an offset** (no reduction).
* **Who qualifies:**
  + Must be a **military retiree** (20+ years of service).
  + Must have a **VA disability rating of 50% or higher** (even if non-combat-related).
* **How it's paid:** It’s automatic—you don’t have to apply. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will adjust your pay once VA notifies them of your rating.

**CRSC – Combat-Related Special Compensation**

* **What it is:** CRSC is **tax-free compensation** for retirees whose VA-rated disabilities are **combat-related** (e.g., from combat, training that simulates combat, hazardous duty, or an instrumentality of war like a vehicle explosion).
* **Who qualifies:**
  + Must be entitled to and/or receiving **military retirement pay**.
  + Must have a **VA disability rating** and at least one **combat-related condition**.
  + Must apply through your **branch of service** (this is not automatic).
* **Why apply:** CRSC **replaces** any retirement pay that was reduced because of your VA pay—it restores that portion as tax-free income.

**Choosing Between CRDP and CRSC**

You **cannot receive both** CRDP and CRSC at the same time. If you qualify for both, DFAS will automatically pay the one that provides the higher monthly amount—but you **can switch** between the two during DFAS’s annual Open Season (typically held in December).

**Application Timelines**

* **CRDP:** No application needed. DFAS usually adjusts your retirement pay 30–90 days after VA updates your rating.
* **CRSC:** You **must apply** to your branch of service. It can take **4–6 months** for a decision, depending on the complexity and documentation.

**What You Should Do Next**

* If you’re rated **50% or higher**, you should be receiving **CRDP**—let’s double-check your DFAS Retiree Account Statement (RAS) to be sure.
* If you believe **any of your conditions are combat-related**, I highly recommend reviewing to see if  **CRSC** would be the greater benefit for you.  I can help you gather your records, write your statement, and submit the application to your branch.
* If you're under 50% but have combat-related injuries, CRSC may still be an option even if CRDP is not.

Please feel free to send me your most recent **VA Rating Decision Letter** and your **Retiree Account Statement** if you’d like me to do a full review and guide you through the CRSC application.

I know this can be overwhelming, but you're not alone—I'm here to make sure nothing falls through the cracks.