



**District 20
Post Service Officer
Training**

Veterans' Benefits Presentation

Lee Rivas, District 20 Service Officer

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Overview

- Introduction
- **Our District's PSO Mission**
- **Benefits Our District Provides Assistance With**
- Summary

Mission

To assist Veterans and their eligible survivors in obtaining benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the State of Texas.



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Services Provided

- ❖ **Assist eligible veterans & families with advice and counsel (but no application) for the following benefits:**
 - **Service-Connected Disabilities**
 - **Non-Service-Connected Pension**
 - **Dependency Indemnity Compensation**
 - **Survivor Pension**
 - **VA Healthcare Application**
 - **Burial Benefits**
 - **Discharge Paperwork (DD-214)**

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Services Provided (cont.)

- State Veterans Land Board Information
- VA Home Loans
- Information/Outreach
- Referrals
- VA Appeals Assistance
- Military Discharge Reviews
- VA Debt Waivers
- Facility / Home Visits

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What is a Veteran?

If a member served on regular **ACTIVE** duty, either under normal enlistment or by being ordered to active duty by the President, he/she has Veteran status as reflected on his DD Form 214.

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Federal Benefits

- **VA Healthcare**
- **Service-Connected Disabilities**
- **Non-Service-Connected Pension**
- **Dependency Indemnity Compensation**
- **Survivor Pension**
- **Education**
- **Home Loans**
- **Burial**



Health Care Benefits



Health Care Benefits

- Audie L. Murphy Memorial VA Hospital
7400 Merton Minter Blvd
San Antonio, TX and its servicing Clinics
210-617-5300
- 462 Beds w/emergency department
- Basic Eligibility – a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or release under conditions other than Honorable may qualify for VA health care.



Health Care Benefits

- 8 Priority Groups
- How to enroll
 - In Person - Go to VA Eligibility at VA Hospital
 - Telephone 1-877-222-8387
 - Online - <https://www.vets.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>
 - By Mail – Fill out VA Form 10-10ez
 - Mail to: Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairemont Road, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647



VA Claims

- Veterans can file two types of claims to the VA for monetary benefits:
 - Service-Connected Disabilities
 - Non-Service-Connected Pension
- Eligible Dependents can file two types of monetary claims to the VA (once the Veteran has passed)
 - Dependency Indemnity Compensation
 - Survivor's Pension



Service-Connected Compensation

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VA Service-Connected Disability

- Tax-free monthly payment to Veteran
- Compensation paid for 10% SC or higher
- Discharge/release other than dishonorable
- In the line of duty
- Result of -
 - injury/disease incurred/aggravated on active duty or active duty for training
 - or from injury, heart attack, or stroke during inactive duty training
- Additional compensation for dependents when 30% or higher

Process of Filing a Claim

- Gather Supporting Evidence
- Prepare and Submit Claim to VA
- VA Processes Claim
- C&P Exam
- Decision from VA
- Fiduciary/ Payee





Non-Service-Connected Pension



VA Veteran's Pension

- Monthly benefit payments provided to eligible WARTIME era veterans with a financial need
- Veteran must meet certain criteria:
 - Discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, **AND**
 - Served 90 days or more in active service (with at least 1 day during wartime). If served after Sep 7, 1980, must have served 24 months or full period that were called up for **AND**
 - Countable income is below the Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR), **AND**
 - Meets net worth limitations, (\$127,061) **AND**
 - Age 65 or older, **OR** has a permanent & total non-service connected disability, **OR** a patient in a nursing home, **OR** receiving Social Security disability benefits



VA Pension – Wartime Periods

World War II

December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946

Korea

June 27, 1950, through January 31, 1955

Vietnam Era

August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975

Service also counts as wartime if it was performed in the Republic of Vietnam during the period February 28, 1961, through August 4, 1964.

Gulf War

August 2, 1990, through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation. (ongoing)

IF THE VETERAN DIDN'T SERVE IN A WARTIME PERIOD, THEN THEY (AND DEPENDENTS) ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE VA PENSION BENEFIT



Special Monthly Pension

Two types

- Aid & Attendance
 - Require another person's assistance in performing daily living activities OR
 - Bedridden (remain in bed apart from convalescence or treatment)
- Housebound
 - Have single permanent disability at 100% disabling, and are permanently & substantially confined to your immediate premises; OR
 - Have single permanent disability at 100% disabling, and have another disability(ies) independently evaluated at 60% (or more) disabling

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Veteran's Pension-Information Needed

- Personal information
- Service information
- Work history
- Marital status
- Current marital information (only complete if Veteran is currently married)
- Dependent children (only complete if Veteran has dependent children)
- Income verification
- Medical, legal, or other unreimbursed expenses
- Direct deposit



VA Pension - Countable Income

- Income Inclusion

- Gifts and Inheritances of Property or Cash
- Retirement programs
- Interest
- Dividends
- Gains from gambling

- Income Exclusions

- Welfare/SSI
- Work Restoration Programs (VHA)
- Income Tax Refunds
- Chore Services Payments
- Loans (including Reverse Mortgages)

Net Worth Bright-Line Limit

Effective 12/1/2019 is \$129,094




Surviving Spouse and Dependents Benefits

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Eligible Dependents' Claims to VA

- Eligible Dependents can file two types of claims to the VA (once the Veteran has passed)
 - Dependency Indemnity Compensation
 - Death was related to service connected disability or 100% for 10 years or more.
 - Survivor's Pension
 - Income base program



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

- DIC is a tax-free monthly payment made to -
 - surviving spouse, child, or parent because of SC death on or after January 1, 1957
 - or surviving spouse or child because Veteran rated as totally disabled due to SC disability prior to death for a certain length of time



DIC Rates

Veteran's Death Was On or After 1/1/1993

Effective 12/1/19

Basic Monthly Rate	\$1,340.14
If rated 100% for 8 years prior to death	Add \$284.57
For "Each" dependent under 18	Add \$286.00
If the surviving spouse is entitled to A&A	Add \$332.00

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Survivor's Pension

Survivor's, or Death, Pension is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income, unremarried surviving spouses and unmarried children of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.

Pension is designed to afford the beneficiary a minimum level of security and is not intended to protect substantial assets or build up the value of an estate.

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Survivor's Pension

Eligibility

- Veteran of surviving spouse must meet certain criteria:
 - Discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, **AND**
 - Served 90 days or more in active service (with at least 1 day during wartime); If served after Sep 7, 1980, must have served 24 months or full period that were called up for
- The surviving spouse must also meet certain criteria:
 - Countable income is below the Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR), **AND**
 - Meets net worth limitations, **AND**
 - Remain UNMARRIED since the Veteran's death



Survivor's Pension Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR)

Rate as of 12/1/2019

Situation	Annual	Monthly
Surviving Spouse alone (no dependents)	\$9,224	\$768.67
Surviving Spouse with one dependent	\$12,072	\$1,006.00
Housebound w/o dependents	\$11,273	\$939.41
Housebound w/one dependent	\$14,116	\$1167.16
A&A w/o dependents	\$14,742	\$12,228.50
A&A w/dependents	\$17,586	\$1,465.50



Appeals



Review Option

- Supplemental Claim
 - Submit New and Relevant Evidence
- Higher-Level Review
 - DROC will review decision, possible informal conference
- Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA)
 - Request a hearing or review when submitting VA Form 10182
- US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
 - We cannot represent claimants before the US CAVC
 - Must be received NLT 120 days after the board mailed the notice of the decision



Burial Benefits

Burial Benefits

FSH National Cemetery

- Other than dishonorable discharge
- Submit for “pre-need burial eligibility”
- Acres 154.7
- Established 1926
- Currently over 144,000 internments
- About 1,250 per acre X 2 = 2,500

- Family members – YES
- Cremations – YES
- Ceremony



State Cemetery

- Operated by state grant programs (i.e., Texas State Cemetery, Austin, TX)
- Same criteria for remains as federal
- State is paid up to \$700 Plot Allowance for Veterans



Federal Education Benefits

Federal Education

- **Montgomery GI Bill (CH 30)**
- **Vocational Rehab (CH 31)**
- **Post-9/11 (CH 33)**
 - 90 Days – 6 Mo = 40%
 - 18 Mo – 24 Mo = 70%
 - 36 Mo – More = 100%
 - (Forever GI Bill) If separated after 1/1/13
- **Survivors/Dependents DEA (CH 35)**





State of Texas Veterans Benefits

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State Benefits

- Property Tax Exemption
- Education (Hazlewood)
- State Cemeteries
- State Veterans Homes (Houston, TX)
- Home & Land Loans
- Hunting and Fishing Licenses (Disabled- 50%)
- Free State Park Admissions (Disabled- 60%)
- Free Drivers License (Disabled- 60%)
- Specialty and Disabled Veteran License Plates
- Veterans' Preference for State Agencies



State Education Benefits

Hazelwood Act Educational Benefit

- Texas Resident upon entry into the military
- Honorable or General under honorable conditions
- Not in default of federal loans or loans guaranteed by the state
- 150 Hours of State School's Education

Hazelwood Legacy Program

- Transferable to dependent children ONLY
- In-state Funded Schools Only



Land Board Programs

- Below market interest rates
- Land Loans: 125K 1 acre minimum 30 yr. fixed Min. 5% down
- Home Loans: Up to 417K New Construction/Energy Star
- Disabled Vets = 50 basis points or one half of 1% discount on interest rate
- Home Improvement: Up to 25K for 20 yrs. - - - 10K for 10 Years
- \$0 Down



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Summary

- **Thank you for your service**
- **Know your benefits and ways to attain them**
- **Be active and assist your fellow Veterans**

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

Lee Rivas

District 20 Service Officer

