

Surviving Spouses are entitled to many VA Benefits, but before the passing of your spouse there are a number of things that should be done:

- Copies of spouse's DD-214, DD-215 or for WWII veteran, a WD Form, these documents provide service dates and type of discharge, or give their full name, military service number, branch and dates of service. Also the veteran's service discharge, a copy of each of these documents should be kept in a safe location accessible to the veteran and next of kin or designated representative. It may also be a good idea to have:
- Copies of veteran's marriage certificate, children's birth certificates or adoption papers to determine children's benefits.

With the passing of the veteran the spouse or next of kin should present the documents listed above to the County Veteran's Service Officer, they will be able to help you take the appropriate steps in honoring your fallen veteran.

### **General Eligibility**

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service, other than active duty for training, as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, Environmental Science Services Administration or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or its predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey. Generally, men and women veterans with similar service may be entitled to the same VA benefits.

Dishonorable and bad conduct discharges issued by general courts-martial may bar VA benefits. Veterans in prison and parolees must contact a VA regional office to determine eligibility. VA benefits will not be provided to any veteran or dependant wanted for an outstanding felony warrant.

### **Wartime Service**

Certain VA benefits require wartime service. Under the law, VA recognizes these war periods:

- Mexican Border Period: May 9, 1916, through April 5, 1917, for veterans who served in Mexico, on its borders or in adjacent waters.
- World War I: April 6, 1917, through Nov. 11, 1918; for veterans who served in Russia, April 6, 1917, through April 1, 1920; extended through July 1, 1921, for veterans who had at least one day of service between April 6, 1917, and Nov. 11, 1918.
- World War II: Dec 7, 1941, through Dec 31, 1946.
- Korean War: June 27, 1950, through Jan. 31, 1955.
- Vietnam War: Aug. 5, 1964 (Feb. 28, 1961, for veterans who served "in country" before Aug. 5, 1964), through May 7, 1975.

- Gulf War: Aug. 2, 1990, through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation.

## **Burial**

VA offers certain benefits and services to honor our Nation's deceased veterans.

Headstones and Markers: VA can furnish a monument to mark the unmarked grave of an eligible veteran.

Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC): VA can provide a PMC for eligible recipients.

Burial Flag: VA can provide an American flag to drape an eligible veteran's casket.

Reimbursement of Burial Expenses: Generally, VA can pay a burial allowance of \$2,000 for veterans who die of service related causes. For certain other veterans, VA can pay \$300 for burial and funeral expenses and \$300 for a burial plot.

Burial in a VA National Cemetery: Most veterans and some dependents can be buried in a VA national cemetery.

Time Limits: There is no time limit to claim reimbursement of burial expenses for a service-related death. In other cases, claims must be filed within two years of the veteran's burial.

## **What VA Offers**

VA benefits and services are in these major categories:

- Compensation
- Pension
- Health Care
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
- Education & Training
- Home Loans
- Life Insurance
- Dependents & Survivors
- Burial

## **Who is Eligible?**

You may be eligible for VA benefits if you are:

- A veteran
- A veteran's dependent

A surviving spouse, child or parent of a deceased veteran  
An active duty military service member  
A member of the Reserve or National Guard

### **Compensation**

VA can pay monthly compensation if you are at least 10% disabled as result of your military service.

### **Pension**

You can receive a monthly pension if you are a wartime veteran with limited income, and you are permanently and totally disabled or at least 65 years old.

Time Limits: There is no time limit to apply for Compensation Pension benefits.

### **Special Toll-Free Numbers**

Health Care	877-222-8387
Education & Training	888-442-4551
VA Life Insurance	800-669-8477
Office of SGLI	800-419-1473
CHAMPVA	800-733-8387
Helpline (Agent Orange & Gulf War)	800-749-8387
Direct Deposit	877-838-2778
Headstones (status of claims only)	800-697-6947
Telecommunication Device for Deaf (TDD)	800-829-4833

### **Internet**

For detailed information about all VA benefits and services, visit

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

Survivors. Information specific to survivors is available. Select “Benefits,” the “Survivors’ Benefits.”

Applications. Apply for Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Education, or Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment benefits by selecting “Apply Online.”

Inquiries. A “Contact VA” link is available for e-mail inquiries.

The following table contains links to forms in the PDF format.

## **BENEFIT DESCRIPTION**

## **APPLICATION FORMS**

Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

VA Form 21-534

Death Pension

VA Form 21-534

Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance (DEA)

VA Form 22-5490

Home Loan Guaranty

VA Form 26-1817

MEDICAL – CHAMPVA

VA Form 10-10d

VA Form 10-7959c

Request Copy of DD Form 214

Specialized Vocational Training

VA Form 22-5490

To Claim VA Life Insurance

Separate Claim Forms are used for (SGLI/VGLI). For all others, click [Here](#). < >

Burial Benefits a Spouse Should Consider Upon the Death of the Veteran

Separate Forms are Available Through the National Cemetery Administration Web Site

Burial Flags

VA Form 21-2008

Related Benefits

TRICARE Retiree Dental Program

Social Security Administration

Civil Service Preference

Commissary and Exchange Privileges

Montgomery GI Bill Death Benefit

Death Gratuity

Military Records and Medals

Burial at Arlington National Cemetery

Internal Revenue Service Information

This web site has all of the Descriptions and Application Forms that are needed for the VA to process any case.

In addition to the benefits provided through the VA, the State of Florida provides many benefits through the County Veterans Service Officer.

## **Veterans' Service Mission**

To provide accurate information, meaningful counseling, and compassionate quality and effective claim initiation assistance to County residents who may be entitled to receive veteran related Federal and State entitlements and whose quality of life will be enhanced through relief of financial and health care burdens.

When you visit your local Veterans' Service Office, skilled counselors will be able to assist you. They have a compassionate understanding of the problems which face veterans, their widow or widower, child, or dependent parent.

All of our counselors know the meaning, extent, and application of laws which affect veterans and their dependents, as well as the rules and regulations, governing the functions and procedures of the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) which implement applicable laws. The counselors will apply their specialized knowledge and training in the best way suited to the needs of each client.

Counselors also provide information and assistance on the procurement of veteran related entitlements which may be available from other governmental Agencies.

Counselors are available to address groups, attend informational events, or any other related veteran function in order to provide information, educational materials, or lend assistance upon request.

If you would like a detailed explanation on any benefit offered, please call or visit your local County Veteran Service Officer. By State law each county within Florida must have a Veterans' Service Officer.

State of Florida Service Officers: Click on the link.

[http://mclfl.org/ARTICLES/ServiceOfficers/FL\\_Vet\\_Service\\_Officers.pdf](http://mclfl.org/ARTICLES/ServiceOfficers/FL_Vet_Service_Officers.pdf)