



Meade County Veteran Services

What is a VSO?

- Disability Compensation, VA Healthcare enrollment, Non-Service Connected Pension, Spousal Benefits, Educational Benefits, Burial Benefits, Discharge Upgrades, Corrections of Military Records, Medals

We are your face-to face service when dealing with the VA. We **are not** VA employees, but work for the State and County as your advocate to be sure you get the benefits you have **earned** during your service to your country. We deal with these benefits on a daily basis and the ins-and-outs of benefit application

Records of Importance

- DD-214 This is your most important document!

South Dakota law makes it non-public, it is THE KEY to all VA Benefits!! Also almost as important, marriage certificates, birth certificates, divorce certificates

- Service Medical Records
- Private Treatment Records
- Orders, Finance Records, Awards, Medal

Disability Compensation

- Appoint a Representative (SDDVA, DAV)
- Make your claim complete
- Be Patient

What is a “Service Connected” Disability

- incurred / aggravated while on “active military service”
- under conditions “other than dishonorable”
- no willful misconduct
- no wartime service requirement

Disability Compensation

- also injuries incurred while receiving VA treatment
- injuries aggravated while receiving VA sponsored treatment
- injuries incurred while pursuing Vocational Rehabilitation

Disability Compensation

- Ratings Defined
 - Congress establishes \$ amount of rating
 - 0-100% depending on severity “whole person”, several individual, one combined
 - 0% is not a bad thing necessarily
 - Paid back to discharge w/in 1 year or date of claim

Disability Compensation

- SMC Special Monthly Compensation, K etc
- Temporary Ratings (surgery convalescence)
- P&T Permanently and Totally Disabled
- Schedule Reviews / Future Exams
- Increases / Secondary Conditions /
Reopened Claim / New Claim

Continued and Confirmed Ratings

- The 10 year protection rule: the service connection that has been in force for 10 or more years cannot be severed but for fraud
- The 20 year protection rule: if veteran has held a rating at or above a specific level continuously for 20+ years, it cannot be reduced but for fraud

Dependents (must be 30% or more)

- If spouse or children paid at higher rate
- When child turns 18-23 must attend school
- financially dependent parents
- Be sure to notify VA of changes (divorce, 18 without school, etc) they will recoup

Unemployability Ratings

- IU is a provision where a veteran may receive payment as though they were rated at 100%
- Must be found unable to secure gainful employment due to disability
- One disability at 60% or several from common etiology at 60% or two/more with one rated 40 with a combined rating of 70

Disability Comp Miscellaneous

- Exposure to radiation, asbestos, burn pits
- PTSD / TBI
- Presumptives (some have to show symptoms to a compensable degree within 1 year of release)
- Agent Orange Presumptives (now recognize service in Thailand and ships)

Disability Comp (Special Benefits)

- Clothing Allowance
- Specially Adapted Housing/Vehicles
- Vocational Rehabilitation: 20% or more that impairs the veterans ability to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment consistent with aptitudes, abilities, or interests

Dependent Indemnity Compensation

- a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of a service member whose death resulted:
 - from a SC injury or disease
 - Non-SC but was receiving VA Compensation for a SC that was rated as totally disabling for at least 10 years immediately before death
 - from the time of the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death
 - For at least one year before death if the veteran was a former POW who died after Sept 30, 1999

Dependency and Indemnity Comp

- The surviving spouse if he or she:
 - validly married the veteran before 1 Jan 1957
 - married the vet within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that cause the death began
 - was married to the vet for at least one year, has a child with the vet, or cohabitated with the vet or if separated was not at fault for separation
 - is not currently remarrieda surviving spouse who remarries after December 16, 2003 and on or after attaining age 57 is entitled to continue to receive DIC
 - Children: if not included on spouse's DIC, unmarried, Under 18 or attending school between 18 and 23

VA Health Care

- Priority Group 1 : 50% or more or unemployable
- Group 2 : 30% to 40% disabling
- Group 3 : Purple Heart, POWs, 10% to 20%
- Group 4 : Aid and Attendance or Housebound
- Group 5: Non service connected but below income thresholds, VA pensions, or Medicaid
- Group 6: 0% SC, Vietnam, Desert Storm
- Group 7 / 8 : above thresholds 38K to 52K
- OEF/OIF are automatically given 5 years

VA Health Care

- Active duty service and a discharge under other than dishonorable conditions
- Must have completed 24 continuous months of active military service if enlisted after Sept 1980 or officer began after Oct 1981
- Exception: reservists/guard who were called to active duty and completed the term for which they were called

VA Health Care Misc.

- Copays vary with Priority Group/treatment
- Dental: Only under specific circumstances
- Hearing Aids and Eye Glasses: 10% or more SC for any condition or 0% or more for hearing loss
- Other coverages encouraged

Pensions

- “needs based” benefit paid to wartime veterans who have limited or no income and net worth. The purpose is to bring income to estab. level
- must be 65 or older or if under 65 must be P&T
- Under other than dishonorable, 90 days of wartime service, 90 days of consecutive service of which 1 day was a period of war or served during a wartime period and was discharged for a SC disability regardless of length of service

Pension Wartime Periods

- WW II --- Dec 7 1941 to Dec 31 1946
- Korea --- June 27 1950 to Jan 31 1955
- Vietnam --- August 5, 1964 to May 7 1975
- Gulf War --- 1990 to a date to be determined

Pension

- Death Pension for Widows / Children
- Death does not have to be Service Connected but deceased vet must meet wartime service
- One difference is spouse or child does not have to be P&T

Pensions continued..

- Eligibility Verification Reports (EVRs)
- Annually must report all income/assets
- Medical Expense reports
- Report properly, the VA will find out and will overpay and then recoup
- If not it will stop and is a real mess

Special Monthly Pension

- Housebound -- substantially confined to home and the immediate premises or, if institutionalized, to the ward and will continue throughout lifetime
- Aid & Attendance -- Inability to dress, keep clean, adjust prosthetic, feed or tend to needs of nature, bedridden
- Physician statement needed

Assisted Living

- Do not warrant presumption of Aid and Attendance
- Nursing Home -- once Title 19 pension award is reduced to \$90, not to be used to defray costs to state, strictly for the vet

Burial and Memorial Benefits

- Service Connected Death: VA may pay up to \$2000 for the vets funeral/burial expenses; no time limit for applying
- Non-Service Connected: on or after Oct 2011 VA may pay a \$300 burial allowance and addtl plot allowance; must be submitted within 2 years
- Headstone/Marker furnished
- Important: DD-214 / most funeral homes do rest

Burial and Memorial Benefits

- Transportation expenses
- Headstones and Markers / Setting Fee
- Replacement Markers
- Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Burial Flags
- Burial in National Cemetery / At Sea

Burial and Memorial Benefits

- Most important thing is family members having your DD-214
- Call DOD and VA to stop payments
- Make your wishes known (VA or Private)
- Work with a reputable funeral home

Educational Benefits

- Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30)
 - 10 years from release from active duty
 - much more leeway for courses / schools
 - VEAP is not the same

Educational Benefits

- Post 9/11 GI Bill:
 - NOT a VA program, it is a DOD retention tool
 - specific that it has to be an educational program from a DEGREE GRANTING institution of HIGHER LEARNING
 - Cant use both Montgomery & 9/11 must make an irrevocable choice

Educational Benefits

- On-the Job Training: only with Montgomery i.e. police certification,
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Chap 35 Survivor and Dependent Program
 - Died of SC or are P&T now or at death

SOUTH DAKOTA BENEFITS

- Free certified copies of DD-214
- Burial Allowances
- Free Tuition for Children of Vets who die during service
- Reduced tuition for Guard members
- License Plates
- Hunting and Fishing / State Parks

South Dakota State Benefits

- Property Tax Exemption up to \$100,000
- Civil Service Preference
- South Dakota Bonus up to \$500

State Veterans Home

- Must be a Veteran per South Dakota Definition
- Vets, Vets plus Spouse, Widows/Widowers
- 50% of gross monthly income
- Able care for self/living qtrs on admission
- no alcohol / physical / mental health

MISCELLANEOUS

- VA Home Loan Certificate of Eligibility
- Discharge Upgrades (court martial vs...)
- Medals / Decorations
- Retrieve Records (DD-214, Active Duty Medical, Personal Info File, VA records)
 - online or paper

The Great 1973 Fire

- On July 12, 1973, a fire at the National Personnel Records Center destroyed 80% of Army records of those discharged 1912 to Jan 1, 1960 and 75% Air Force, names Hubbard thru "Z" discharged Sept 1947 and Jan 1, 1964
- Are able piece together to some extent

Before any Questions an Advertisement

- “Honored Internment” by State Vets Home
- Tomorrow April 21 at Sturgis Veteran’s Clubs
Basement a RUMMAGE SALE from 7 am to 2 pm
- ALL YEAR, Rummage Sale, Women of War, 2nd
Chance Thrift Store, 521 State Street, Belle
Fourche, SD Mon-Thur 9 to 6 Sat 9-4
- DAVE, Weekdays 8 to 5, CALL for APPT

Questions?

Thank you for your
service

