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 veteran’s 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 remarried ... a 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 vet's 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-Thu 9 to 6 Sat 9-4
- DAVE, Weekdays 8 to 5, CALL for APPT
Questions?
Thank you for your service