



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



2016-2017

SERVICE OFFICER BOOKLET

Marty Harris, Department Commander

Dan Garcia, Senior Vice Commander

Dave Lemelin, Junior Vice Commander

Mel Sheppard, Adjutant

John Minnick, Quartermaster



PREFACE	1
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES	
Eligibility	3
Replacement of Discharge Papers	7
E-BENEFITS	9
FDC (FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIM) PROCESS INFORMATION	10
BENEFITS DELIVERY AT DISCHARGE (BDD)	12
QUICK START PROGRAM	13
SECTION I Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative	14
SECTION II Periods of Service	15
SECTION III Service Connection	16
Basic Entitlement, Filing and Original Claim, Claim for Increase, Clothing Allowance	
SECTION IV Service Connected Death Benefits	17
DIC, Death Pension and/or Accrued Benefits	
SECTION V Pension for Non-Service Connected Disability or Death	18
Benefit, Evidence	
SECTION VI Burial Benefits	19
(A) Eligibility	
(B) Burial in a VA National Cemetery	
(C) Certain Eligible Parents	
(D) Headstones, Markers and Medallions	
(E) Private Cemeteries	
(F) Burial Flags	
(G) Reimbursement of Burial Expenses	
(H) Burial Allowance	
(I) Plot Allowance	
(J) Military Funeral Honors	
VA PHONE NUMBERS	24
VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM	25
VA HEALTH CARE (BRIEF OVERVIEW)	26
HOMELESS VETERANS	37
VA GUARANTEED HOME LOANS FOR VETERANS	39
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	40
VA FORMS INCLUDED IN THIS BOOKLET	42

PREFACE

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Alaska, Veterans Service Office is pleased to present you with this 25th edition of the Post Service Officers' Booklet.

The purpose of this manual is to assist Post Service Officers in filing for specific entitlements and does not include all benefits available to them. In using this book as a basic guide, you should remember that these entitlements are subject to change, and the information contained herein is given for general guidance in filing a claim. Please note that the forms included in this booklet are frequently updated. Please visit www.va.gov/forms prior to completion to be sure you have the most up to date forms.

All Veterans are encouraged to establish an account and utilize the eBenefits system, a service of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense. Many frequently requested services are available via this program.

In providing vital and effective service to our veterans, you are encouraged to work in close coordination with your Department Service Officers.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at:

Telephone: (907) 257-4801
Toll Free: 1-888-353-7574 ext. 4801
FAX: (907) 257-4831
Address: VFW Alaska Service Office
VA Regional Office
1201 North Muldoon Road, Suite 2A220
Anchorage, AK 99504

Wasilla Satellite Office
(907) 373-7600

VA Toll Free: 1-800-827-1000 - Benefits
1-888-353-7574 - Medical



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

For our organization to continue its fine record of service to our nation's veterans and their families, we must maintain a growth in membership. Membership is the muscle that enables us to influence legislation favorable to our cause. Without a strong membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, all veterans face a very uncertain future.

The potential for our organization is tremendous. Good recruiter programs designed to make sure that every eligible veteran is contacted and invited to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars, would swell our ranks substantially.

Eligibility for VFW membership requires honorable service in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard in any foreign war or expedition recognized by award of a U.S. campaign or service medal. If separation papers do not show entitlement to a qualifying campaign or service medal, the veteran may obtain the information from the appropriate branch of service.

Membership is never a requirement for assistance from our State and Post Service Officers.

See next page for eligibility information.

How to Determine Eligibility for VFW Membership

Refer to Section 101 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure for detailed information.

Entitlement to one of the recognized campaign or service medals should be shown on the separation document or DD-214. Service in Korea without the issuance of a campaign medal can be established with additional support documentation. Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay can be established with pay records. Unless one of these can be established, the individual must be considered as ineligible at that time.

To prove eligibility, the applicant may request verification of his/her entitlement to a campaign medal by completing, signing, and submitting a Standard Form 180 to the appropriate agency housing the military records. This form is available from any Veterans Administration office and usually from the offices of local and county veterans service officers. You may also obtain the necessary forms from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri at the following website
<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/index.html>.

VFW National Headquarters does not have access to military records and cannot determine eligibility except by a study of separation documents, additional support documentation or pay records submitted with the request for determination.

PERSONS IN MILITARY SERVICE:

Persons still serving in the active armed forces may be accepted for membership provided they meet eligibility requirements. With their application for membership, they should be required to submit a statement signed by their commanding officer or personnel officer certifying to their having earned a campaign medal, or records establishing Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay.

TYPES OF DISCHARGE:

VFW eligibility requires Honorable Service. If the discharge is a General Discharge under Honorable Conditions, a Post is well justified in checking into the reasons for a General Discharge before accepting an applicant for membership.

A Undesirable, Bad Conduct, Dishonorable or Discharge Certificate under Other than Honorable Conditions does not meet the requirements for VFW eligibility. Refer to the Manual of Procedure, Section 101- Eligibility - Subsequent Service - for provisions under which persons with subsequent service are eligible.

ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICANTS:

Refer to Sections 102 and 103 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure for detailed information.

All persons joining the Post, whether as a new member or a transfer from another Post, must submit an application card to the Post Adjutant or Quartermaster and be accepted by the Post. Previous membership in another Post can never be accepted as evidence of eligibility.

In accordance with Section 103 of the VFW Manual of Procedure, an applicant may be recommended after eligibility has been fully determined by the Post Review Committee, and shall be accepted by the majority vote of the Post members. The applicant shall then be notified and obligated as prescribed in the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

It is the responsibility of each Post to ensure that each applicant for membership meets the qualifying eligibility criteria outlined in the VFW Manual of Procedure. Any person found to be ineligible after acceptance shall be removed under the procedure outlined in Section 108 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, *Challenging Members Eligibility*.

VFW Eligibility Information

The fundamental differences between our organization and other veterans organizations, and one in which we take great pride, are our eligibility qualifications. There are three primary requisites for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States: (1) U.S. Citizen or U.S. National (2) Honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States (3) Service entitling the applicant to the award of a recognized campaign medal or as set forth in the Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

Sec. 103 -- ELECTION:

Applications. After the applicant has filled out the application card, it should be provided to the post adjutant or quartermaster, together with the dues (and admission fee, if applicable). A receipt shall be given to the applicant.

An applicant may be recommended after eligibility has been fully determined by the post reviewing committee. With respect to a department member-at-large, the department headquarters is responsible for the eligibility determination.

The original application of every member will be retained on file with the adjutant.

Balloting on Applications. Before voting on the application during a post meeting, the commander shall allow the members present an opportunity to state their objections, if any, to the admission of the applicant. Unless one member present shall request a written ballot, a vote shall be taken and a majority of the votes cast shall decide acceptance or rejection of the application.

Rejection of Applicant. Should an applicant be rejected by the post, the admission fee and dues shall be returned. After one year (12 months), he may again make application, but a person shall not be proposed for membership more than twice in one post. An applicant rejected in one post may apply to another post or become a department member-at-large.

Notification. The member shall be notified of his acceptance and that he is in good standing, subject to the by-laws governing the organization. The member shall receive a membership card and will be eligible to receive a lapel pin.

Obligation. New post members may receive the obligation according to the ritual.

CHECKING ELIGIBILITY: Proof of service to establish eligibility for membership rests with the applicant. The post is responsible for assuring the eligibility of every member accepted to membership. A careful check of eligibility at the time a person joins will save a great deal of trouble and embarrassment later. A veteran who is not accepted for membership because of ineligibility at the time of application is only disappointed. A member who is removed for ineligibility after having paid dues for several years is justifiably angry.

Assuming that a person is a United States citizen or United States national and has an honorable discharge from the U.S. armed forces, it only remains to be proven that the person has earned a recognized campaign medal or badge; served in Korea between June 30, 1949, until present; or earned Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay eligibility. Those people in the armed forces of the United States shall become eligible for membership immediately upon arrival on hostile soil, in hostile waters or the airspace above in the performance of service.

Discharges issued during and immediately after World War II have a section on the back listing the medals and decorations that have been earned. Persons discharged later received a DD-214, "Report of Separation" form, which lists the medals and decorations on the front. Lost separation documents can be replaced by completing and submitting GSA Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining to Military Records."

There is always a possibility of an omission on the separation documents. If an applicant claims entitlement to a medal, which is not shown on the individual's separation papers, that person may request verification and correction of records by submitting a GSA Standard Form 180.

The GSA Standard Form 180 is available from any office of the Veterans' Affairs or state veterans' departments. The form must be completed and signed by the veteran in order to receive the information requested or authorize the release of the information to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Request for records can also be obtained through the National Personnel Records Center at www.archives.gov/veterans.

For subsequent service, refer to Sec. 101 of the Manual of Procedure.

ELIGIBILITY REGULATIONS: The following is to be used as a guide in determining eligibility for membership. The following campaign medals and the periods issued have been authorized by the United States of America, and the holder of any such medal or medals is recognized as possessing the campaign medal requisite of eligibility.

VFW ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Campaign Medals	Military Service	Qualifying Dates	Campaign Medals	Military Service	Qualifying Dates
<u>Expeditionary</u>	Navy - Marine Corps	Feb. 12, 1874 - Open	Germany (<i>West Berlin</i>)		May 9, 1945 - Oct. 2, 1990
<u>Spanish Campaign</u>	Army Navy	May 11, 1898 - Aug. 16, 1898 Apr. 20, 1898 - Dec. 10, 1898	Korea		Sep. 3, 1945 - Jun. 29, 1949
<u>Army of Cuba Occupation</u>	Army	Jul. 18, 1898 - May 20, 1902	Japan		Sep. 3, 1945 - Apr. 27, 1952
<u>Army of Puerto Rico Occupation</u>	Army	Aug. 14, 1898 - Dec. 10, 1898	<u>Navy Occupation Service Medal</u>		
<u>Philippine Campaign</u>	Army Navy	Feb. 4, 1899 - Dec. 31, 1913 Feb. 4, 1899 - Sep. 15, 1906	Italy		May 8, 1945 - Dec. 15, 1947
<u>China Relief Expedition</u>	Army Navy	Jun. 20, 1900 - May 27, 1901 Apr. 5, 1900 - May 27, 1901	Trieste		May 8, 1945 - Oct. 26, 1954
<u>Cuban Pacification</u>	Army Navy	Oct. 6, 1906 - Apr. 1, 1909 Sep. 12, 1906 - Apr. 1, 1909	Germany (<i>except West Berlin</i>)		May 8, 1945 - May 5, 1955
<u>Mexican Service</u>	Army Navy	Apr. 12, 1911 - Jun. 16, 1919 Apr. 12, 1914 - Feb. 7, 1917	Austria		May 8, 1945 - Oct. 25, 1955
<u>First Nicaraguan Campaign</u>	Navy	Jul. 29, 1912 - Nov. 14, 1912	Asiatic Pacific		Sep. 2, 1945 - Apr. 27, 1952
<u>Haitian Campaign</u>	Navy	Jul. 9, 1915 - Dec. 6, 1915 Apr. 1, 1919 - Jun. 15, 1920	<u>Korean Service Medal</u>		Jun. 27, 1950 - Jul. 27, 1954
<u>Dominican Campaign</u>	Navy	May 4, 1916 - Dec. 5, 1916	<u>Navy & Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal</u>		
<u>World War I Victory</u> (with battle or service clasp incl. Siberia and European Russia)	Army Navy	Apr. 6, 1917 - Apr. 1, 1920 Apr. 6, 1917 - Mar. 30, 1920	Cuban Military Operation		Jan. 3, 1961 - Oct. 23, 1962
<u>Army Occup. of Germany</u>	Army	Nov. 12, 1918 - Jul. 11, 1923	Thailand Military Operation		May 16, 1962 - Aug. 10, 1962
<u>Second Nicaraguan Campaign</u>	Navy	Aug. 27, 1926 - Jan. 2, 1933	Iranian, Yemen & Indian Ocean Operation		Dec. 8, 1978 - Jun. 6, 1979 Nov. 21, 1979 - Oct. 20, 1981
<u>Yangtze Service</u>	Navy	Sep. 3, 1926 - Oct. 21, 1927 Mar. 1, 1930 - Dec. 31, 1932	Lebanon		Aug. 20, 1982 - May 31, 1983
<u>China Service</u>	Navy	Jul. 7, 1937 - Sep. 7, 1939 Sep. 2, 1945 - Apr. 1, 1957	Libyan Expedition		Jan. 20, 1986 - Jun. 27, 1986
<u>American Defense Service</u> (with foreign service clasp)	Army - Navy	Sep. 8, 1939 - Dec. 7, 1941	Persian Gulf		Feb. 1, 1987 - Jul. 23, 1987
<u>European-African- Middle Eastern Campaign</u>	Army - Navy	Dec. 7, 1941 - Nov. 8, 1945	Panama (pre and post invasion)		Apr. 1, 1988 - Dec. 19, 1989 Feb. 1, 1990 - Jun. 13, 1990
<u>American Campaign</u> (30 consecutive or 60 non- consecutive days of duty outside continental limits of the U.S.)	Army - Navy	Dec. 7, 1941 - Mar. 2, 1946	Operation Sharp Edge - Liberia		Aug. 5, 1990 - Feb. 21, 1991
<u>Asiatic-Pacific Campaign</u>	Army - Navy	Dec. 7, 1941 - Mar. 2, 1946	Operation Distant Runner - Rwanda (11th Marine Exped. Unit USS Peleliu)		Apr. 7-18, 1994
<u>Army of Occupation</u> (30 consecutive days of duty)			<u>Vietnam Service Medal</u>		Jul. 4, 1965 - Mar. 8, 1973
Italy		May 9, 1945 - Sep. 15, 1947	<u>Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal</u>		
Germany (<i>except West Berlin</i>)		May 9, 1945 - May 5, 1955	Lebanon		Jul. 1, 1958 - Nov. 1, 1958
Austria		May 9, 1945 - Jul. 27, 1955	Taiwan Straits		Aug. 23, 1958 - Jan. 1, 1959
			Quemoy & Matsu Islands		Aug. 23, 1958 - Jun. 1, 1963
			Vietnam		Jul. 1, 1958 - Jul. 3, 1965
			Congo		Jul. 14, 1960 - Sep. 1, 1962
			Laos		Apr. 19, 1961 - Oct. 7, 1962
			Berlin		Aug. 14, 1961 - Jun. 1, 1963
			Cuba		Oct. 24, 1962 - Jun. 1, 1963
			Congo		Nov. 23-27, 1964

Campaign Medals	Military Service	Qualifying Dates	Campaign Medals	Military Service	Qualifying Dates
Dominican Republic		Apr. 23, 1965 - Sep. 21, 1966	Operation Desert Thunder - <i>Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea support.</i>		Nov. 11, 1998 - Dec. 22, 1998
Korea		Oct. 1, 1966 - Jun. 30, 1974			
Cambodia		Mar. 29, 1973 - Aug. 15, 1973			
Thailand (only those in direct support of Cambodia)		Mar. 29, 1973 - Aug. 15, 1973	Operation Desert Fox - <i>Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, USN Red Sea support.</i>		Dec. 16, 1998 - Dec. 22, 1998
Operation Eagle Pull - <i>Cambodia (includes evacuation)</i>		Apr. 11-13, 1975			
Operation Frequent Wind - <i>Vietnam (includes evacuation)</i>		Apr. 29-30, 1975	Southwest Asia Service Medal Operation Desert Shield/ Operation Desert Storm (combat areas of operation only)		Aug. 2, 1990 - Nov. 30, 1995
Mayaguez Operation		May 15, 1975			
El Salvador		Jan. 1, 1981 - Feb. 1, 1992	Personnel assigned to support units serving in Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Jordan.		Jan. 17, 1991 - Apr. 11, 1991
Lebanon		Jun. 1, 1983 - Dec. 1, 1987			
Operation Urgent Fury - <i>Grenada</i>		Oct. 23, 1983 - Nov. 21, 1983	Kosovo Campaign Medal Operation Allied Force - <i>Kosovo Air Campaign</i>		Mar. 24, 1999 - Jun. 10, 1999
Eldorado Canyon - <i>Libya</i>		Apr. 12-17, 1986	Kosovo Defense Campaign - <i>Ground Action</i>		Jun. 11, 1999 - Open
Operation Earnest Will - <i>Persian Gulf (only those participating in, or in direct support)</i>		Jul. 24, 1987 - Aug. 1, 1990	Combat Infantryman Badge & Combat Medical Badge	Army	Dec. 6, 1941 - Open
Operation Just Cause - <i>Panama (USS Vreeland & other SVS-designated aircrew mbrs. outside the Conus in direct support)</i>		Dec. 20, 1989 - Jan. 31, 1990	Air Force Combat Action Medal		Sep. 11, 2001 - Open
United Shield - <i>Somalia</i>		Dec. 5, 1992 - Mar. 31, 1995	Combat Action Ribbon	Navy - Marine Coast Guard	Dec. 6, 1941 - Open Dec. 6, 1941 - April 30, 1975
Operation Restore Hope - <i>Somalia</i>		Dec. 5, 1992 - Mar. 31, 1995	Coast Guard Combat Action Ribbon	Coast Guard	May 1, 1975 - Open
Operation Uphold Democracy - <i>Haiti</i>		Sep. 16, 1994 - Mar. 31, 1995	Combat Action Badge	Army	Sep. 18, 2001 - Open
Operation Joint Endeavor - <i>Bosnia, Croatia, the Adriatic Sea & airspace.</i>		Nov. 20, 1995 - Dec. 19, 1996	SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia	Navy	Jan. 21, 1961 - Open
Operation Vigilant Sentinel - <i>Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, & Persian Gulf.</i>		Dec. 1, 1995 - Feb. 15, 1997	Korea Duty Service on the Korean Peninsula, its airspace and territorial waters for (30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days of duty)		Jun. 30, 1949 - Open
Operation Southern Watch - <i>Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Persian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Gulf of Oman W of 62° E Long., Yemen, Egypt, & Jordan.</i>		Dec. 1, 1995 - Mar. 18, 2003	Korea Defense Service Medal		Jul. 28, 1954 - Open
Operation Maritime Intercept - <i>Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman W of 62° E Long., Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, & Jordan.</i>		Dec. 1, 1995 - Mar. 18, 2003	Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal		Sep. 11, 2001 - Open
Operation Joint Guard - <i>Bosnia, Croatia, Adriatic Sea & airspace.</i>		Dec. 20, 1996 - Jun. 20, 1998	Afghanistan Campaign Medal		Sep. 11, 2001 - Open
Operation Northern Watch - <i>Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Persian Gulf W of 56° E Long., and Incirlik AB, Turkey (only pers. TDY to ONW)</i>		Jan. 1, 1997 - Mar. 18, 2003	Iraq Campaign Medal		Mar. 19, 2003 - Open
Operation Joint Forge - <i>Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Adriatic Sea & airspace.</i>		Jun. 20, 1998 - Mar. 23, 1999	Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with GOLD BORDER		Apr. 2004 - Open
			Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay		Jan. 1, 1971 - Present
<p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p>This information is to be used for guideline purposes only. The separation document or DD 214 MUST reflect campaign medal service to establish eligibility. Service in Korea without the issuance of a campaign medal can be established with additional, support documentation. Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay can be established with pay records.</p>					

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Requests from veterans or deceased veteran's next-of-kin may be submitted online by using eVetRecs at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>
To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE BELOW.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much information as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, full middle)		2. SOCIAL SECURITY #		3. DATE OF BIRTH		4. PLACE OF BIRTH	
5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below.)							
	BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER	ENLISTED	SERVICE NUMBER (If unknown, write "unknown")	
a. ACTIVE				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
b. RESERVE				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
c. STATE NATIONAL GUARD				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? NO YES - *MUST provide Date of Death if veteran is deceased:* _____

7. DID THIS PERSON RETIRE FROM MILITARY SERVICE? NO YES

SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:

DD Form 214 or equivalent. Year(s) in which form(s) issued to veteran: _____

This form contains information normally needed to verify military service. A copy may be sent to the veteran, the deceased veteran's next-of-kin, or other persons or organizations, if authorized in Section III, below. **An UNDELETED DD214 is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits.** If you request a DELETED copy, the following items will be blacked out: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and, for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost.

An UNDELETED copy will be sent UNLESS YOU SPECIFY A DELETED COPY by checking this box: I want a **DELETED** copy.

Medical Records Includes Service Treatment Records, Health (outpatient) and Dental Records. *IF HOSPITALIZED (inpatient) the FACILITY NAME and DATE (month and year) for EACH admission MUST be provided:* _____

Other (Specify): _____

2. **PURPOSE:** (Providing information about the purpose of the request is **strictly voluntary**; however, it may help to provide the best possible response and may result in a faster reply. Information provided will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.)

- Benefits (explain) Employment VA Loan Programs Medical Genealogy Correction Personal Other (explain)

Explain here: _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER NAME:

2. I am the MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN identified in Section I, above.

I am the DECEASED VETERAN'S NEXT-OF-KIN (*MUST submit Proof of Death. See item 2a on instruction sheet.*)

(Relationship to deceased veteran)

I am the VETERAN'S LEGAL GUARDIAN (*MUST submit copy of Court Appointment*) or AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (*MUST submit copy of Authorization Letter or Power of Attorney*)

OTHER

(Specify type of Other)

3. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:

(Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.)

Name _____

Street _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

4. **AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE:** I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section III is true and correct and that I authorize the release of the requested information. (See items 2a or 3a on accompanying instruction sheet. Without the Authorization Signature of the veteran, next-of-kin of deceased veteran, veteran's legal guardian, authorized government agent, or other authorized representative, only limited information can be released unless the request is archival. No signature is required if the request is for archival records.)

Signature Required - Do not print

Date

Daytime phone

Fax Number

Email address

* This form is available at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans-military-service-records/standard-form-180.pdf> on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) web site. *

The various categories of military service records are described in the chart below. For each category there is a code number which indicates the address at the bottom of the page to which this request should be sent. Please refer to the Instruction and Information Sheet accompanying this form as needed.

BRANCH	CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE MEMBER		
		Personnel Record	Medical or Service Treatment Record
AIR FORCE	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 5/1/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 9/30/2004	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/1/2004 – 12/31/2013	1	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014	1	13
	Active (including National Guard on active duty in the Air Force), TDRL, or general officers retired with pay	1	
	Reserve, IRR, Retired Reserve in non-pay status, current National Guard officers not on active duty in the Air Force, or National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force	2	
	Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force	2	13
COAST GUARD	Discharge, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1898	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1898 – 3/31/1998	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 4/1/1998 – 9/30/2006	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/1/2006 – 9/30/2013	3	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 10/1/2013	3	14
	Active, Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve or TDRL	3	
MARINE CORPS	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1895	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1905 – 4/30/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 12/31/1998	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1999 – 12/31/2013	4	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014	4	8
	Individual Ready Reserve	5	
	Active, Selected Marine Corps Reserve, TDRL	4	
ARMY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 11/1/1912 (enlisted) or before 7/1/1917 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 11/1/1912 – 10/15/1992 (enlisted) or 7/1/1917 – 10/15/1992 (officer)	14	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/16/1992 – 9/30/2002	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired (including TDRL) 10/1/2002 – 12/31/2013	7	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired (including TDRL) on or after 1/1/2014	7	9
	Current Soldier (Active, Reserve (including Individual Ready Reserve) or National Guard)	7	
NAVY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1886 (enlisted) or before 1/1/1903 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1886 – 1/30/1994 (enlisted) or 1/1/1903 – 1/30/1994 (officer)	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/31/1994 – 12/31/1994	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1995 – 12/31/2013	10	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014	10	8
Active, Reserve, or TDRL	10		
PHS	Public Health Service - Commissioned Corps officers only	12	

ADDRESS LIST OF CUSTODIANS and SELF-SERVICE WEBSITES (BY CODE NUMBERS SHOWN ABOVE) – Where to write/send this form

1	Air Force Personnel Center HQ AFPC/DPSIRP 550 C Street West, Suite 19 Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4721	6	National Archives & Records Administration Research Services (RDT1R) 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20408-0001	11	Department of Veterans Affairs Records Management Center ATTN: Release of Information P.O. Box 5020 St. Louis, MO 63115-5020
2	Air Reserve Personnel Center Records Management Branch (DPTSC) 18420 E. Silver Creek Avenue Building 390 MS 68 Buckley AFB, CO 80011	7	US Army Human Resources Command's web page: https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Accessing%20or%20Requesting%20Your%20Official%20Military%20Personnel%20File%20Documents or 1-888-ARMYHRC (1-888-276-9472)	12	Division of Commissioned Corps Officer Support ATTN: Records Officer 1101 Wootton Parkway, Plaza Level, Suite 100 Rockville, MD 20852
3	Commander, Personnel Service Center (BOPS-C-MR) MS7200 US Coast Guard 2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE Washington, DC 20593-7200 MR_CustomerService@uscg.mil	8	Navy Medicine Records Activity (NMRA) BUMED Detachment St. Louis 4300 Goodfellow Boulevard, Building 103 St. Louis, MO 63120	13	AF STR Processing Center ATTN: Release of Information 3370 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 116 San Antonio, TX 78217
4	Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps Manpower Management Records & Performance (MMRP-10) 2008 Elliot Road Quantico, VA 22134-5030	9	AMEDD Record Processing Center 3370 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 116 San Antonio, TX 78217	14	National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) 1 Archives Drive St. Louis, MO 63138-1002 eVetRecs: http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/
5	Marine Forces Reserve 2000 Opelousas Avenue New Orleans, LA 70146-5400	10	Navy Personnel Command (PERS-313) 5720 Integrity Drive Millington, TN 38055-3120		

eBenefits

A Service of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense

Did you know that with eBenefits you can apply for.....

- ✓ Disability Compensation
- ✓ Add or Remove Dependent(s)
- ✓ VA Health Care
- ✓ Education Benefits
- ✓ Pension Benefits
- ✓ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
- ✓ Burial Benefits

Did you know that with eBenefits you can manage.....

- ✓ Compensation Claim Status
- ✓ Personal Contact Information
- ✓ Direct Deposit Information
- ✓ VA Payment History
- ✓ VA Letters
- ✓ Certificate of Eligibility for Home Loan
- ✓ Supporting Document Upload for Claims
- ✓ Manage VA Health Medical Records
- ✓ VA Prescription Refills
- ✓ VA Medical Appointment Scheduling
- ✓ Hearing Aid Batteries and Prosthetic Socks
- ✓ VA Medical Provider Messaging
- ✓ DoD TRICARE Health Insurance

For a complete list of services offered by eBenefits, visit:
www.ebenefits.va.gov

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is VA's online personal health record. It was designed for Veterans, active duty Service members, their dependents and caregivers. My HealtheVet helps you partner with your health care team. It provides you opportunities and tools to make informed decisions and manage your health care

Specific features in My HealtheVet are available to you based on your account type. All users who have a Basic account are able to view their self-entered information. If you are a VA patient, you can upgrade your account to Advanced or Premium. For more information about account types and what you can view, visit My HealtheVet Account Types.

Among the newest features available to Veterans with a Premium Account include VA Notes. These are clinical notes that your health care team records during your appointments or hospital stays. Also available are your VA Immunization records, more detailed lab reports and a list of your current medical issues. These features are in addition to prescription refills, VA Appointments and Secure Messaging – all very popular with Veterans!

To sign up for My HealtheVet, visit:
<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/index.html>

FDC (FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIM)

The Fully Developed Claim (FDC) Program is the fastest way to get your claim processed, and there is no risk to participate! Participation in the FDC Program is **optional** and will not affect the quality of care you receive or the benefits to which you are entitled. If you file a claim in the FDC Program and it is determined that other records exist and VA needs the records to decide your claim, then VA will simply remove the claim from the FDC Program (Optional Expedited Process) and process it in the Standard Claim Process.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Submit simultaneously with your claim:

- * All, if any, relevant, private medical treatment records; **AND**
- * An identification of any relevant treatment records available at a Federal facility, such as a VA medical center.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Depending on the claim being filed, you may also be required to submit with your claim:

- * **For Guard and Reserve members**, any and all Service Treatment and Personnel Records in the custody of your Unit(s).
- * **If claiming dependents**, a completed VA Form 21-686c, *Declaration of Status of Dependents*. If claiming a child in school between the ages of 18 and 23, you must also submit a completed VA Form 21-674, *Request for Approval of School Attendance*. If claiming benefits for a disabled (helpless) child, you must also submit all, relevant, private medical treatment records pertaining to the child's pertinent disabilities.
- * **If claiming Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**, a completed VA Form 21-071, *Statement in Support of Claim for Service Connection for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, or if claiming PTSD based on personal assault, a completed VA Form 21-0781a, *Statement in Support of Claim for Service Connection for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Secondary to Personal Assault*.
- * **If claiming Individual Unemployability**, a completed VA Form 21-8940, *Veteran's Application for Increased Compensation Based on Unemployability*, and a completed VA Form 21-4192, *Request for Employment Information in Connection with Claim for Disability Benefits*.
- * **If claiming Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation**, a completed VA Form 26-555, *Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant*.
- * **If claiming Auto Allowance**, a completed VA Form 21-4502, *Application for Automobile or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment*.
- * **If claiming additional benefits because you or your spouse require Aid and Aid Attendance**, a completed VA Form 21-2680, *Examination for Housebound Status or Permanent Need for Regular Aid and Attendance*, or if claiming Aid and Attendance based on nursing home attendance, a

VA Form 21-0779, *Request for Nursing Home Information in Connection with Claim for Aid and Attendance.*

- * **If claiming DIC as the parent of the veteran**, all necessary income and net-worth information and, if claiming benefits as the foster parent of the veteran, a completed VA Form 21-24, *Statement of Person Claiming to Have Stood in Relation of Parent.*
- * **If claiming benefits as the surviving spouse of the veteran**, a copy of your marriage certificate showing your marriage to the veteran, or **if claiming benefit for a child or biological/adoptive parent of the veteran**, a copy of the birth certificate or court record of adoption showing relation to the veteran.
- * **For current active duty Service Members**, all service treatment records for your current period of service.

All relevant records must be submitted, simultaneously, with your claim in the Fully Developed Claim Process. If you submit additional information or evidence after you submit your FDC claim, then VA will remove the claim from the FDC Program Expedited Process and process it in the Standard Claim Process.

Removal from the FDC Program Expedited Process
DOES NOT MEAN YOUR CLAIM HAS BEEN
DENIED!

The veteran, spouse, parent and/or child may opt out of the FDC Process by checking the appropriate box on the application.

Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD)

BDD allows a Service member to submit a claim for disability compensation 60 to 180 days prior to separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization. BDD can help you receive VA disability benefits sooner, with a goal of within 60 days after release or discharge.

Eligibility

BDD requires a minimum of 60 days to allow sufficient time to complete the medical examination process (which may involve multiple specialty clinics) prior to separation from service. If you are closer than 60 days to separation from service, you can submit a [Quick Start](#) claim. BDD is available nationwide and open to all Service members on full time active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserve. Members of the Coast Guard may also participate.

Requirements To Participate	BDD Program
Do I have a known separation date?	Yes
How far away is my known separation date?	60 - 180 days
When must I submit my service treatment records to VA?	At the time claim is submitted
When and where must I complete all phases of my VA/DoD medical separation examination process?	At your point of separation, prior to release from the military
When may I apply?	If you meet all of the BDD requirements above, you may apply for BDD 60-180 days prior to separation.

How to Apply

To file a pre-discharge claim under BDD, do one of the following:

- Submit your application online using eBenefits and follow the instructions about where to submit your service treatment records
- Complete the VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits, and submit it with copies of your service treatment records to the VA location nearest you.

Quick Start Program

Quick Start allows a Service member to submit a claim for disability compensation 1 to 59 days prior to separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization. Submitting your disability compensation claim before discharge makes it possible to receive VA disability benefits as soon as possible after separation, retirement, or demobilization.

Eligibility

Service members with 1-59 days remaining on active duty or full time Reserve or National Guard (Title 10 or Title 32) service, or Service members who do not meet the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) criteria requiring availability for all examinations prior to discharge, may apply through Quick Start. The program is available nationwide and open to all Service members on full time active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves.

Requirements To Participate	Quick Start Program
Do I have a known separation date?	Yes
How far away is my known separation date?	1 - 59 days
When must I submit my service treatment records to VA?	At the time claim is submitted
When and where must I complete all phases of my VA/DoD medical separation examination process?	At your point of separation, prior to release from the military
When may I apply?	If you meet all of the requirements above, you may apply for Quick Start 1-59 days prior to separation. *Quick Start allows National Guard or Reserve members attending demobilization briefings to file a claim and leave the area where the VA disability claim was submitted. Those unable to complete the application before separation can submit a claim through the traditional claims process after separation.

How to Apply

To file a pre-discharge claim under Quick Start, do one of the following:

- Submit your application online using eBenefits and follow the instructions about where to submit your service treatment records
- Complete the VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits, and submit it with copies of your service treatment records to the VA location nearest you.

SECTION I
APPOINTMENT OF SERVICE ORGANIZATION AS
CLAIMANT'S REPRESENTATIVE
VA FORM 21-22

- a. Veteran should sign (spouse may sign if veteran is unable)
- b. Appointments are valid when duly signed and dated. Will remain valid until death of veteran, at which time survivor should file VA Form 21-22.
- c. Veteran may revoke at any time. Request must be in writing. A new VA Form 21-22 will change organization. The latest date will prevail.

FILLING OUT VA FORM 21-22

- 1. Enter name of veteran.
- 2. Enter VA Claim Number (if known and if applicable)
- 3A. Enter "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S."
- 4. Enter Social Security Number of the veteran.
- 6 - 7 *These are completed only if the Claimant is someone other than the Veteran (i.e. spouse, child)*
- 8. Enter claimant's complete address.
- 9A. Enter veteran's daytime telephone number.
- 9B. Enter veteran's evening telephone number.
- 10. Enter an e-mail address (this is sometimes used to contact a veteran if other means of contact are unsuccessful)
- 11. Date this form is signed.
- 12. ***Should always be checked.***
- 13. ***Limitation of consent: Veteran may specify that certain personal records have restricted access. Be sure to explain the veterans options.***
- 14. This authorizes the claimant's representative to change their address, if requested. Without this checked, we are unable to update their personal information.
- 15. Veteran (or spouse if veteran is unable or deceased) must sign in block "Signature of Claimant."
- 16. Enter date form is signed.

INFORMATION:

- a. Submit a 21-22 with all claims. For schooling, there must be a 21-22 for spouse and each child.
- b. For insurance claims a 21-22 is required.
- c. Veteran filing for Vocational Rehabilitation needs to file 21-22, even if one is of record in the VA Claims Folder.

ALL VA FORMS ARE LOCATED AT THE END OF THIS BOOKLET

SEE PAGE 42 FOR FORMS TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION II PERIODS OF SERVICE

Wartime Service:

Under current law, VA recognizes the following wartime periods to determine eligibility:

MEXICAN BORDER: May 9, 1916 through April 5, 1917. Eligibility for VA benefits requires 90 or more days of service in Mexico, on the border of Mexico or the waters adjacent thereto.

WORLD WAR I: April 6, 1917 through November 11, 1918. If a veteran has service in Russia, the ending date is extended to April 1, 1920. Service after November 11, 1918, through July 1, 1921, qualifies for benefit purposes if active duty was performed for any period during the basic World War I period.

WORLD WAR II: December 7, 1941 through December 31, 1946. If a veteran was on duty on December 31, 1946, then continuous service through July 25, 1947, where continuous active duty began on or before December 31, 1946.

KOREAN CONFLICT: June 27, 1950 through January 31, 1955.

VIETNAM ERA: February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975 for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period; otherwise August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975.

PERSIAN GULF WAR: August 2, 1990, through a future date to be set by Presidential Proclamation or law.

SECTION III SERVICE CONNECTION

BASIC ENTITLEMENT:

1. Service connection means that a disability resulting from injury or disease was incurred or aggravated in line of duty, not the result of misconduct, in active military service.
2. Presumption of Service Connection - Service connection may be granted for certain chronic diseases if any were, or can be shown to have existed to a degree of 10% or more within the presumptive period following discharge from service.
3. A disability which is due to, or the result of, a service connected disease or injury will be service connected and will be considered a part of the original condition.
4. Veterans who are found to be eligible for disability compensation are entitled to monthly payments.
5. Veterans whose service connected disabilities are rated at 30% or more are entitled to additional monthly allowances for dependents.

FILING AN ORIGINAL CLAIM, CLAIM FOR INCREASE AND MORE...:

1. Original claims, new claims, claims for an increase in service connected disabilities, individual unemployability and much more can be made on:
VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits.

CLOTHING ALLOWANCE:

An annual clothing allowance may, upon application, be authorized each veteran who is receiving compensation for a service connected disability for which he wears, or uses, one or more prosthetic appliances, which is determined to wear or tear his clothing.

1. VA determines if on a continuing basis - this pays automatically each year.
2. VA determines not on a continuing basis - veteran must apply each year.

Application is made on:

VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance.

ALL VA FORMS ARE LOCATED AT THE END OF THIS BOOKLET

SEE PAGE 42 FOR FORMS TABLE OF CONTENTS

**SECTION IV
SERVICE CONNECTED DEATH BENEFITS**

DIC, DEATH PENSION, AND/OR ACCRUED BENEFITS

1. DIC payments are authorized for widows, widowers, unmarried children under age 18, as well as helpless children. If attending a VA approved school, children between ages 18-23 are considered.
2. Service connected death will be considered when the evidence establishes that the veteran died in line of duty, on active duty, or after discharge, as the result of a service incurred disability.
3. Prior to December 31, 1992, DIC shall be paid based on the highest pay grade attained by the deceased veteran. DIC Act of 1992 provides that death after December 31, 1993 will result in a flat rate. With annual COLA increase, this year's basic rate is **\$1,215** per month for surviving spouses. In addition to basic rate, **\$301.00** per month is payable to surviving spouse who has minor child or children. If surviving spouse is also entitled, additional separate award for each child over 18 is payable at, \$255 for school child and \$513 for a helpless child. This benefit is payable for the initial two years of entitlement to DIC or until the last minor child is removed from the benefit, if earlier than two years. This transitional benefit is payable for all original DIC awards commencing on or after Jan. 1, 2006. Surviving spouses awarded DIC from Feb. 1, 2003, through Dec. 31, 2004, are entitled to that portion of the two year period that remains as of Jan. 1, 2005. Survivor's income does not affect DIC for service connected deaths.
4. DIC is also payable for certain veterans who were rated 100% service connected disabled at time of death provided:
 - (a) the veteran was continuously rated totally disabled for a period of 10 or more years, or
 - (b) if rated for a lesser period, was so rated continuously for a period of not less than five years from the date of discharge.
5. Widow/widower must have been married to veteran for not less than one year preceding veteran's death.
6. Dependent parents may also be eligible for DIC. These payments are based on annual income. As countable income increases, the monthly rate is decreased by a specified number of cents for each dollar income. Parents should complete SECTION V on the form.

Application is made on VA Form 21-534EZ, Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits.

ALL VA FORMS ARE LOCATED AT THE END OF THIS BOOKLET

SEE PAGE 42 FOR FORMS TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION V
PENSION FOR NON-SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILILTY OR DEATH

BENEFIT:

Pension is a monthly payment to a veteran who has served honorably during the Mexican border period, World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict or the Vietnam era. Pension may be payable to a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled from disabilities not related to service. Upon the death of the veteran, spouse and/or dependent children may be entitled to death pension.

EVIDENCE:

To support a claim for non service-connected pension, the evidence must show:

1. You met certain minimum requirements regarding active service during a period of war. Generally, those requirements involve:

90 days of consecutive service at least one day of which was during a period of war;

OR

90 days of combined service during at least one period of war

(Note: If your service began after September 7, 1980, additional length of service requirements may apply, typically requiring two years of continuous service or completion of active-duty obligation)

OR

Any length of active service during a period of war with a discharge due to a service-connected disability

2. You are age 65 or older *or* are permanently and totally disabled. You are considered permanently and totally disabled if medical evidence shows you are:

A patient in a nursing home for long-term care; **OR**

Receiving Social Security disability benefits; **OR**

Unemployable due to a disability reasonably certain to continue throughout your lifetime; **OR**

Suffering from a disability that is reasonably certain to continue throughout your lifetime that would make it impossible for an average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation; **OR**

Suffering from a disease or disorder that VA determines causes persons who have that disease or disorder to be permanently and totally disabled.

3. Your net worth and income do not exceed certain requirements.

Application is made on VA Form 21-527EZ, Application for Pension.

ALL VA FORMS ARE LOCATED AT THE END OF THIS BOOKLET

SEE PAGE 42 FOR FORMS TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION VI

BURIAL BENEFITS

A. Eligibility

Veterans discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable and service members who die while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, as well as spouses and dependent children of Veterans and active duty service members, may be eligible for VA burial and memorial benefits including burial in a national cemetery, a headstone to mark the grave of a Veteran interred in a private cemetery or a Presidential Memorial Certificate for loved ones. The Veteran does not have to die before a spouse or dependent child can be eligible.

With certain exceptions, active duty service beginning after Sept. 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and after Oct. 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 consecutive months or the full period of active duty (as in the case of reservists or National Guard members called to active duty for a limited duration). Active duty for training, by itself, while serving in the reserves or National Guard, is not sufficient to confer eligibility. Reservists and National Guard members, as well as their spouses and dependent children, are eligible if they were entitled to retired pay at the time of death, or would have been upon reaching requisite age. See Chapter 8 for more information.

VA's National Cemetery Scheduling Office or local national cemetery directors verify eligibility for burial. A copy of the Veteran's discharge document that specifies the period(s) of active duty and character of service is usually sufficient to determine eligibility. In some instances, a copy of the deceased's death certificate and proof of relationship to the Veteran (for eligible family members) may be required.

Under Section 2411 of Title 38 of the United States Code, certain otherwise eligible individuals found to have committed federal or state capital crimes are barred from burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery, and from receipt of Government-furnished headstones, markers, medallions, burial flags, and Presidential Memorial Certificates. Veterans and other claimants for VA burial benefits have the right to appeal decisions made by VA regarding eligibility for national cemetery burial or other memorial benefits. Chapter 13 discusses the procedures for appealing VA claims. This chapter contains information on the full range of VA burial and memorial benefits. Readers with questions may contact the nearest national cemetery, listed by state in the VA Facilities section of this book, call 1-800-827-1000, or visit the web site at www.cem.va.gov.

B. Burial in VA National Cemeteries

Burial in a VA national cemetery is available for eligible Veterans, their spouses and dependents at no cost to the family and includes the gravesite, grave-liner, opening and closing of the grave, a headstone or marker, and perpetual care as part of a national shrine. For Veterans, benefits may also include a burial flag (with case for active duty), and military funeral honors. Family members and other loved ones of deceased Veterans may request Presidential Memorial Certificates.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries, of which 72 are open for new casketed interments and 18 are open to accept only cremated remains. Burial options are limited to those available at a specific cemetery and may include in-ground casket, or interment of cremated remains in a columbarium, in-ground or in a scattering garden. Contact the national cemetery directly, or visit our Web site at: www.cem.va.gov to determine if a particular cemetery is open for new burials, and which other options are available.

The funeral director or the next of kin makes interment arrangements by contacting the National Cemetery Scheduling Office or, in some cases, the national cemetery in which burial is desired. VA does not normally conduct burials on weekends. Gravesites cannot be reserved; however, VA will honor reservations made before 1973 by the Department of the Army.

Surviving spouses of Veterans who died on or after Jan. 1, 2000, do not lose eligibility for burial in a national cemetery if they remarry. Burial of dependent children is limited to unmarried children under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if a full-time student at an approved educational institution. Unmarried adult children who become physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before age 21, or age 23 if a full-time student, also are eligible for burial.

C. Certain Eligible Parents: A new Federal law passed in 2010 (Public Law 111-275) extends burial benefits to certain parents of service members who die as a result of hostile activity or from combat training-related injuries who are buried in a national cemetery in a gravesite with available space. The biological or adopted parents of a service member who dies in combat or while performing training in preparation for a combat mission, leaving no surviving spouse or dependent child, may be buried with the deceased service member if the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines that there is available space. The law applies to service member who died on or after Oct. 7, 2001 and to parents who died on or after Oct. 13, 2010.

D. Headstones, Markers and Medallions: Veterans, active duty service member, and retired Reservists and National Guard service member are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker for their grave at any cemetery – national, state veterans, tribal Veterans, or private. VA will deliver a headstone or marker at no cost, anywhere in the world. For eligible Veterans whose deaths occurred on or after November 1, 1990, VA may furnish a government headstone or marker even if the grave is already marked with a private one, or VA may furnish a medallion instead of a headstone or marker for Veterans' graves in private cemeteries when the grave is already marked with a privately-purchased headstone or marker. Spouses and dependent children are eligible for a government headstone or marker only if they are buried in a national, State, or tribal Veterans cemetery.

Flat markers are available in bronze, granite or marble. Upright headstones come in granite or marble. In national cemeteries, the style provided will be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains. Medallions are made of bronze and are available in three sizes: 5-inch, 3-inch, and 1 ½-inches.

Headstones, markers and medallions previously furnished by the government may be replaced at the government's expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, vandalized or stolen. To check the status of a claim for a headstone or

marker for placement in a national, state or tribal Veterans cemetery, please call the cemetery. To check the status of one being placed in a private cemetery, please call 1-800-697-6947.

Inscription: Headstones and markers must be inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and year of birth and death. They also may be inscribed with other optional information, including an emblem of belief and, space permitting, additional text including military rank; war service such as "World War II;" complete dates of birth and death; military awards; military organizations; civilian or Veteran affiliations; and personalized words of endearment.

E. Private Cemeteries: To submit a claim for a headstone, marker or medallion for use in a private cemetery, mail a completed VA Form 40-1330 Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker (available at www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf), and a copy of the Veteran's military discharge document to Memorial Programs Service (41A1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Road., Quantico, VA 22134-3903. The form and supporting documents may also be faxed toll free to 1-800-455-7143.

Before ordering, check with the cemetery to ensure that the Government-furnished headstone or marker will be accepted. All installation fees at private cemeteries are the responsibility of the applicant.

"In Memory Of" Markers: VA provides memorial headstones and markers with "In Memory Of" as the first line of inscription, to memorialize those whose remains have not been recovered or identified, were buried at sea, donated to science or cremated and scattered. Eligibility requirements are the same as for regular headstones and markers. There is no fee when the "In Memory Of" marker is placed in a national cemetery. All installation fees at private cemeteries are the responsibility of the applicant.

Medallions in Lieu of Government Headstone/Marker: For Veterans whose deaths occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, Public Law 110-157, enacted December 26, 2007, expanded VA authority to provide a medallion instead of a headstone or marker for Veteran's graves in private cemeteries when the grave is already marked with a privately-purchased headstone or marker. Claimants may apply for either a Government furnished headstone or marker to place on the grave, or a medallion to affix to a privately-purchased headstone or marker. For more information visit www.cem.va.gov.

Presidential Memorial Certificates are issued upon request to recognize the United States military service of honorably discharged deceased Veterans. Next of kin, relatives and other loved ones may apply for a certificate by mailing, or faxing a completed and signed VA Form 40-0247 along with a copy of the Veteran's military discharge documents or proof of honorable military service. The processing of requests sent without supporting documents will be delayed until eligibility can be determined. The form and eligibility requirements can be found at www.cem.va.gov

F. Burial Flags: Generally, VA will furnish a U.S. burial flag to memorialize Veterans who received an other than dishonorable discharge. This includes certain persons who served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while in service of the U.S Armed forces and who died on or after April 25, 1951. Also eligible for a burial flag are Veterans who were entitled to retired pay for service in the Reserve or National Guard, or would have been entitled if over age 60; and members or former members of the Selected Reserve who served their initial obligation, or were discharged for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, or died while a member of the Selected Reserve.

The next of kin may apply for the flag at any VA regional office or U.S. Post Office by completing VA Form 21-2008, Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes, available at vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-2008-ARE.pdf. In most cases, a funeral director will help the family obtain the flag.

G. Reimbursement of Burial Expenses: VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$2,000 if the Veteran's death is service-connected. In such cases, the person who bore the Veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA.

In some cases, VA will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a Veteran whose death was service-connected to the nearest national cemetery with available gravesites. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected death cases.

H. Burial Allowance: VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral allowance for Veterans who, at time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled if they were not receiving military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a VA-contracted nursing home or a State Veterans nursing home. In cases in which the Veteran's death was not service-connected, claims must be filed within two years after burial or cremation.

I. Plot Allowance: VA will pay a plot allowance when a Veteran is buried in a cemetery not under U.S. government jurisdiction if: the Veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; the Veteran was receiving compensation or pension or would have been if the Veteran was not receiving military retired pay; or the Veteran died in a VA facility. The plot allowance may be paid to the State for the cost of a plot or interment in a State-owned cemetery reserved solely for Veteran burials if the Veteran is buried without charge. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed.

J. Military Funeral Honors: Upon request, DoD will provide military funeral honors consisting of folding and the presenting of the United States flag and the playing of "Taps." A funeral honors detail consists of two or more uniformed members of the armed forces, with at least one member from the deceased's branch of service.

Family members should inform their funeral director if they want military funeral honors. DoD maintains a toll-free number (1-877-MIL-HONR) for use by funeral directors only to request honors. VA can help arrange honors for

burials at VA national cemeteries. Veterans service organizations or volunteer groups may help provide honors. For more information, visit www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil.

Veterans Cemeteries Administered by Other Agencies

Department of the Army: Administers Arlington National Cemetery. Eligibility is more restrictive than at VA national cemeteries. For information, call (703) 607-8000, write Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA 22211, or visit www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/.

Department of the Interior: Administers two active national cemeteries – Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee. Eligibility is similar to VA national cemeteries.

State Veterans Cemeteries: Eighty-three State Veterans cemeteries offer burial options for Veterans and their families. These cemeteries have similar eligibility requirements but many require State residency. Some services, particularly for family members, may require a fee. Contact the State cemetery or State Veterans affairs office for information. To locate a State Veterans cemetery, www.cem.va.gov/cem/grants/cemetery_list.asp

Application for Burial Benefits are made on VA Form 21P-530.

Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker are made on VA Form 40-1330.

**Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery are made on
VA Form 40-1330M.**

Presidential Memorial Certificate Requests are made on VA Form 40-0247.

Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes are made on VA Form 27-2008.

**ALL VA FORMS ARE LOCATED AT THE END OF THIS BOOKLET.
SEE PAGE 42 FOR FORMS TABLE OF CONTENTS**

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
1201 North Muldoon Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99504
Medical 1-888-353-7574
Business Hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Benefits 1-800-827-1000
Business Hours 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Monday thru Friday, Except Federal Holidays

*Please note: These phone numbers may change at any time.
For VA directory assistance, please call the operator at 257-4700.*

AUDIOLOGY	257-4892
BENEFITS	1-800-827-1000
COMPENSATION & PENSION EXAMS	257-4711
DENTAL	257-4940
HOMELESS VETERAN SERVICE	273-4000
INTEGRATED CARE	257-6904
JOINT VENTURE EAFB	580-3088
LABORATORY	257-4870
MEDICAL	1-888-353-7574
MEDICAL RECORDS	257-4735
PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE	257-5449
PHARMACY	257-4805
PHARMACY REFILLS	1-877-750-4790
PRIMARY CARE	
Team 1	257-7411
Team 2	257-7412
Team 3	257-7413
Team 4	257-7414
Team 5	257-7415
Team 6	257-7416
PROSTHETICS	257-4930
RADIOLOGY	257-4872
SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	257-4854
SURGERY CLINIC	257-4844
TRAVEL OFFICE	257-4738
TRIAGE	257-4710
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	257-4764
VOLUNTARY SERVICE	257-4839

Veterans Choice Program

"Connecting you to timely and convenient access to health care in your community."

About the Program:

Many Veterans will now have the option to receive non-VA health care rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

Beginning November 5, 2014, the new Choice Program will begin to cover non-VA care for eligible Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare. Veterans are eligible if any of these situations apply to you:

- You have been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician
- Your current residence is more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care facility
- You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home
- You face a geographic challenge, such as extensive distances around water or other geologic formations, such as mountains, which presents a significant travel hardship

Every Veteran will receive a letter and a Choice Card in the mail with details about the program. Veterans will be eligible for the program and receive cards in three phases:

1. Veterans who may live more than 40 miles from a VA facility.
2. Veterans who are currently waiting for an appointment longer than 30 days from their preferred date or the date determined to be medically necessary by their physician.
3. All remaining Veterans enrolled for VA healthcare who may be eligible for the Choice Program in the future.

To set up an appointment with a non-VA provider, call the VA at 866-606-8198 and we will work with you to ensure you are approved for care in your community.

How to get started:

To get started, you'll need to pick a non-VA provider, gather some info and give us a call in order to set up an appointment. We will work with you to ensure you are approved for care in your community and schedule you with a local care provider of your choosing.

Steps to Getting an Appointment

1. Decide which non-VA health care provider you would like to use.
Search the list of approved care providers in your community.
2. Make sure you have information on hand about any other health insurance coverage you may have.
3. Call 1-866-606-8198 to make sure you qualify + schedule an appointment.
When you call, we will walk you through the following steps:
 - You will be asked to enter your ZIP code, and first and last name.
 - We will check to make sure you are eligible for this program.
 - We will check which of your needs are covered by the VA.
 - You will be asked for your address and the name of your preferred non-VA provider.Unfortunately, not all providers will be covered so if your preferred provider is not available, we will recommend other providers in your area.
 - We will then work with you to schedule an appointment.

This hotline is exclusively for making sure you are eligible for the Choice Program and setting up a non-VA care appointment. If you have questions about other aspects of your VA medical care or want to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, please call 1-877-222-VETS or visit www.va.gov/health.

HEALTH CARE BENEFITS BRIEF OVERVIEW

For a complete list of Health Care Benefits, visit www.va.gov

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The Affordable Care Act, also known as the health care law, was created to expand access to coverage, control health care costs and improve health care quality and care coordination. If you are enrolled in VA health care, you don't need to take additional steps to meet the health care law coverage standards.

The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs.

VA HEALTH CARE ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY

ENROLLMENT:

There are four ways to apply for enrollment in VA Health Care:

- 1) Online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll.
- 2) By Mail - VA Form 10-10EZ (located at the end of this booklet).
- 3) By Phone - dial 1-877-222-VETS (8387) between 8am and 8pm EST, Monday - Friday.
- 4) In person at any VA health care facility.

ELIGIBILITY:

The number of Veterans who can be enrolled in the health care program is determined by the amount of money Congress gives VA each year. Since funds are limited, VA set up Priority Groups to make sure that certain groups of Veterans are able to be enrolled before others. Once you apply for enrollment, your eligibility will be verified. Based on your specific eligibility information, you will be assigned a Priority Group. The Priority Groups range from 1-8 with 1 being the highest priority for enrollment. Some Veterans may have to agree to pay copays to be placed in certain Priority Groups. You may be eligible for more than one Enrollment Propriety Group. In that case, VA will always place you in the highest Priority Group for which you are eligible. Under the medical benefits package, the same services are generally available to all enrolled veterans.

Priority Group 1

- Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 50% or more disabling.
- Veterans determined by VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions.

Priority Group 2

- Veterans with VA rated service-connected disabilities 30% or 40% disabling.

Priority Group 3

- Veterans who are former prisoners of war (POWs).
- Veterans awarded a Purple Heart medal.
- Veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
- Veterans with VA rated service-connected disabilities 10% or 20% disabling.
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation."
- Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor (MOH).

Priority Group 4

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits from VA.
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled.

Priority Group 5

- Non-service-connected veterans and non-compensable service-connected veterans rated 0% disabled by VA with annual income and/or net worth below the VA national income threshold and geographically adjusted income threshold for their resident location.
- Veterans receiving VA pension benefits
- Veterans eligible for Medicaid programs

Priority Group 6

- Compensable 0% service-connected veterans.
- Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Project 112/SHAD participants.
- Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975.
- Veterans of the Persian Gulf War that served in Southwest Asia Theater of combat operations between August 2, 1990 and November 11, 1998.
- Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for not fewer than 30 days beginning January 1, 1957 and ending December 31, 1987.
- Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998 as follows:

- Currently enrolled veterans and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, are eligible for the enhanced benefits for 5 years post discharge.

NOTE: At the end of this enhanced enrollment priority group placement time period, veterans will be assigned to the highest Priority Group their unique eligibility status at that time qualifies for

Priority Group 7

- Veterans with gross household income below the geographically adjusted income threshold (GMT) for their resident location and who agree to pay copays.

Priority Group 8

- Veterans with gross household incomes above the VA national income threshold and the geographically-adjusted income threshold (GMT) for their resident location and who agrees to pay copays.

Several additional eligibility requirements for this Priority Group.

Once enrolled in VA Health Care, you will receive a benefits handbook that outlines all services and associated fees specifically related to your Priority Group.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP:

Veterans not currently enrolled -

If your income has recently changed, you may qualify for enrollment even if it was previously denied based on your household income.

Personal circumstances, such as loss of employment, sudden decrease in income, or increases of out-of-pocket family health care expenses factor into VA's hardship determination.

If your current and projected household income puts you below the VA National Income Threshold or Geographic Means Test Threshold (GMT) for your area, you may qualify for enrollment and cost-free VA medical care.

Contact your local VA Medical Center Enrollment Coordinator to inquire.

Four possible options for Veterans unable to pay assessed copay charges	
Hardship Determination	A Hardship Determination provides an exemption from outpatient and inpatient copays for the remaining calendar year. If your projected household income is substantially below your prior year's income, you may request a Hardship Determination by contacting your local Enrollment Coordinator.
Waiver	A waiver or "write-off" refers to an agreement to forgive payment of an existing VA debt. If your projected household income for the current year is substantially reduced and will affect your ability to repay your debt, you can request a waiver of your copayment debt. You must request a waiver within 180 days of the date of your billing statement. To request a waiver, contact your local Revenue Office or call VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).
Offer in Compromise	A compromise is an "offer to settle" your past VA debts. VA will consider both current and future household income in making a determination. Generally, offers of compromise that are accepted must be paid in full within 30 days from the date of acceptance. To request a compromise, contact your local Revenue Office.
Repayment Plans	Another option that may be available to you is a VA repayment plan, known as "collection by installment." To request a repayment plan, contact your local Revenue Office or call VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

COPAYMENTS

No copayments are charged for treatment of service-connected conditions.

Outpatient Copayments

— based on the highest of two levels of service on any individual day.

- Primary Care Services – Services provided in a primary care setting to address overall patient care
- Specialty Care Services – Services provided in Specialty Care area such as:
 - Surgery
 - Radiology
 - Audiology
 - Optometry
 - Cardiology
 - and specialty tests such as:
 - magnetic resonance imagery (MRI)
 - computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan
 - nuclear medicine studies (highest level of service)

There is no copay requirement for preventive care services such as screenings or immunizations.

Medication Copayments

— applicable to each prescription, including each 30-day supply or less of maintenance medications.

Annual Changes to Copay Rates

Copay rates may change annually - including the annual cap on medication copayments. Current year rates can be obtained at any VA health care facility.

Veterans Not Required to Make Copayments

Many Veterans qualify for cost-free health care and/or medications based on:

- Receipt of a Purple Heart, or
- Medal of Honor, or
- Former Prisoner of War Status, or
- 50% or more Compensable VA service-connected disabilities, (0-40% service-connected may take co-pay test to determine medication copay status), or
- Veterans deemed catastrophically disabled by a VA provider, or
- Veterans with income below the income limit, or
- Other qualifying factors, including treatment related to their military service experience.

VA and Other Health Insurance

If you have other forms of health care coverage, such as a private insurance plan, Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE, you can continue to use VA along with these plans. Remember: it is

always a good idea to inform your doctors if you are receiving care outside of VA so your health care can be coordinated.

Private Health Insurance

Veterans with private health insurance may choose to use these sources of coverage as a supplement to their VA benefits. Also, Veterans are not responsible for payment of VA medical services billed to their health insurance company that are not paid by their insurance carrier.

By law, VA is obligated to bill health insurance carriers for services provided to treat a Veteran's non-service-connected conditions. Veterans are asked to disclose all relevant health insurance information to ensure current insurance information is on file—including coverage through a spouse. Identification of insurance information is essential to VA because collections received from private health insurance companies help supplement the funding available to provide services to additional Veterans. Veterans may now provide any changes in their insurance by:

- Using the online Health Benefits Renewal (10-10-EZR) form at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll or
- Calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern, or
- Visiting their local VA health care facility.

It is important to note that VA health care is **NOT** considered a health insurance plan.

CAUTION!

Before canceling health insurance coverage, enrolled Veterans should carefully consider the risks.

- There is no guarantee that in subsequent years Congress will appropriate sufficient funds for VA to provide care for all enrollment priority groups.
- Non-Veteran spouses and other family members generally do not qualify for VA health care.
- If participation in Medicare Part B is cancelled, it cannot be reinstated until January of the next year, and there may be a penalty for the reinstatement.
- Provides additional coverage for Veterans who receive care from VA and non-VA providers.

Medical Benefits Package

Your comprehensive VA Health Benefits package includes all the necessary inpatient hospital care and outpatient services to promote, preserve, or restore your health. VA medical facilities provide a wide range of services including traditional hospital-based services such as surgery, critical care, mental health, orthopedics, pharmacy, radiology and physical therapy.

In addition, most of our medical facilities offer additional medical and surgical specialty services including audiology & speech pathology, dermatology, dental, geriatrics, neurology, oncology, podiatry, prosthetics, urology, and vision care. Some medical centers also offer advanced services such as organ transplants and plastic surgery.

Preventive Care Services

- Immunizations
- Physical Examinations (including eye and hearing examinations)
- Health Care Assessments
- Screening Tests
- Health Education Programs

Ambulatory (Outpatient) Diagnostic and Treatment Services

- Primary and Specialty Care
- Surgical (including reconstructive/plastic surgery as a result of disease or trauma)
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse

Hospital (Inpatient) Diagnostic and Treatment Services

- Medical
- Surgical (including reconstructive/plastic surgery as a result of disease or trauma)
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Prescription Drugs (when prescribed by a VA physician)

Women's Health

VA is committed to meeting women Veterans' unique needs by delivering the highest quality health care in a setting that ensures privacy, dignity, and sensitivity. Your local VA facility offers a variety of services, including:

- Women's gender-specific health care (menopause evaluation and symptom management, osteoporosis, incontinence, birth control, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility services).
- Screening and disease prevention programs (for example, mammograms, bone density screening, and cervical cancer screening).
- Childbirth services to the newborn child of a woman Veteran.

Routine gynecologic services available through your local VA facility include:

- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccinations

- Pelvic exams, ultrasounds
- Birth control counseling and management (medical and surgical)
- Pre-pregnancy care
- Treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted infections

Your provider can assist with routine exams, diagnosis, and management of:

- Pelvic/abdominal pain
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Vaginal symptoms (dryness/infections)
- Breast and other women's cancers
- Abnormal cervical screening results
- Infertility evaluation, including intrauterine insemination (IUI). VA is not authorized to provide or cover the cost of in vitro fertilization (IVF).
- Sexual dysfunction

Female Veterans are potentially eligible to receive care provided in the community when authorized by VA. However, the decision to utilize such care is left to the facility providing your care. By law, purchased-care can only be provided when your treating facility cannot provide you the care you require or because of geographical inaccessibility.

Maternity and Parturition (Childbirth) Services—usually provided in non-VA contracted hospitals at VA expense; care is limited to the mother and newborn. VA may furnish health care services to a newborn child of a woman Veteran who is receiving maternity care furnished by VA beginning with the date of birth plus the first seven calendar days after birth.

Contact your local VA facility's Women Veterans Program Manager for more information on available services, or call 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636).

Veteran Health Identification Card

VA issues enrolled Veterans a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) for use at VA health care facilities. The VHIC safeguards your personal information – the Member ID and Card Number have eliminated the need for your SSN to be on the card.

This card is used as proof of identity at VA health care facilities for lab work, diagnostic tests, appointments, prescriptions and other services. While the card is not required to receive health care, VA recommends all enrolled Veterans obtain a card.

To obtain a VHIC, bring proof of identity, such as your legacy VIC card, driver's license or passport to your local VA health care facility and have your photo taken.

The card will be mailed to you, usually within 7 to 10 days after the card has been requested. In the event your card is lost or stolen, you should contact your local VA Medical Facility to determine the nearest facility where you can get a new photo taken for a new card, or call us at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

If you have the old version of the Veteran Identification Card, VA will automatically mail you the new, more secure VHIC in 2014. You may continue to use your VIC until it is replaced but please remember to safeguard it -- your Social Security number is in the barcode and magnetic stripe. Once you receive your new VHIC, you should appropriately destroy your legacy VIC just as you would a credit card -- by cutting the VIC into multiple pieces or by shredding the card.

NOTE: VHIC cannot be used as a credit or an insurance card and it does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA facilities.

Minority Veterans Program

The primary goal of this program is to increase local awareness of minority Veteran related issues and develop strategies for increasing their participation in existing VA benefit programs for eligible Veterans. There is a Minority Veteran Program Coordinator (MVPC) located in each Health Care facility to educate and assist with your eligibility of benefits and services. Other responsibilities include:

- Promoting the use of VA benefits, programs, and services by minority Veterans
- Supporting and initiating activities that educate and sensitize internal staff to the unique needs of minority Veterans
- Targeting outreach efforts to minority Veterans through community networks
- Advocating on behalf of minority Veterans by identifying gaps in services and make recommendations to improve service delivery within their facilities

Military Sexual Trauma

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is the term VA uses to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment occurring during a Veteran's military service.

Health Care Services

VA provides free outpatient, inpatient, and residential services to assist Veterans in their recovery from MST. MST services are available to both male and female Veterans without a limit to the duration of care. MST-related outpatient services

are available at every VA health care facility. VA also has programs that offer specialized MST treatment in a residential or inpatient setting. These programs are for those who need more intense treatment and support. Because some Veterans who experienced MST do not feel comfortable in mixed-gender treatment settings, some facilities have separate programs for men and women. All residential and inpatient MST programs have separate sleeping areas for men and women.

Eligibility

To receive free treatment related to MST, Veterans do not need a VA service-connected disability. Veterans do not need to have reported the incident when it happened or have other documentation that it occurred. There are no length of service requirements to receive care and some Veterans may be able to receive free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other VA care.

Readjustment Counseling Services

VA provides readjustment counseling and outreach services to all Veterans who served in a theater of operations (combat zone), through community based counseling centers called Vet Centers. Services are also available for their family members for military related issues. Veterans have earned these benefits through their service and all are provided at no cost to the Veteran or family. The Vet Centers are staffed by small multidisciplinary teams of dedicated personnel, many of whom are combat Veterans themselves. Vet Center staffs are available toll-free during normal business hours at 1-800-905-4675 (Eastern) and 1-866-496-8838 (Pacific). For information online, visit www.vetcenter.va.gov.

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line is a toll-free, confidential resource that connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders.

Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net to receive free, confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care.

The professionals at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances—from Veterans coping with mental health issues that were never addressed to recent Veterans struggling with relationships or the transition back to civilian life.

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

VA has founded a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Facilities, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service

providers and others in the community. To be connected with a trained VA staff member call 1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838).

- Call for yourself or someone else
- Free and confidential
- Trained VA counselors to assist
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Learn about VA homeless programs and mental health services in your area that can help you. More information can be found at www.va.gov/homeless.

Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Benefits

From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, may have been exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene, and other chemicals.

Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987 may be eligible for cost-free medical care through VA for the following health conditions:

- Bladder cancer
- Breast cancer
- Esophageal cancer
- Female infertility
- Hepatic steatosis
- Kidney cancer
- Leukemia
- Lung cancer
- Miscarriage
- Multiple myeloma
- Myelodysplastic syndromes
- Neurobehavioral effects
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Renal toxicity
- Scleroderma

Veterans already enrolled in VA health care should contact their local VA health care facility to receive care under the new law. Those not already enrolled should call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) for assistance. Family members will receive care after Congress appropriates funds and VA publishes regulations.

The U.S. Marine Corps encourages all those who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune before 1987 to register to receive notifications regarding Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water at <https://usmc.mil/clwater>.

Medically Related Travel Benefits

Veterans may qualify for mileage reimbursement or special mode transportation in relation to travel for VA health care if they:

- Have a service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more; or
- Are traveling for treatment of a service-connected condition; or
- Receive a VA pension; or
- Are traveling for a scheduled compensation or pension examination; or
- Have income below the maximum annual VA pension rate

Special mode travel (e.g., wheelchair van, ambulance) is provided to eligible Veterans based on a clinical determination of need (authorization is not required for emergencies if a delay would endanger their life or health).

Mileage Reimbursement of 41.5 cents per mile may be claimed to offset expense of travel when the Veteran drove to qualified appointment. Reimbursement for actual cost of common carrier travel (bus, train, taxi etc.) is available in some circumstances.

VA has implemented VA Form 10-3542 and created a simple way to apply for Mileage Reimbursement without standing in line. Contact your local VAMC Beneficiary Travel office for details.

Travel benefits are subject to a deductible. Exceptions to the deductible requirement include: 1) travel for a compensation and pension examination; 2) travel by an ambulance or a specially equipped van; and 3) when annual income does not exceed certain limits.

Are You or a Veteran You Know At Risk of Homelessness?

- Are you currently living with someone because you can't afford to rent or own a home of your own?
- Do employers say you don't have the skills or education they are looking for?
- Have you had trouble finding or holding a job?
- Are you struggling with an alcohol or substance use problem?
- Do you have a physical or mental health condition that makes it difficult to keep a steady job?
- Have service-related injuries made returning to civilian life difficult?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, or are feeling worried about your housing situation or that of a Veteran you know, VA can help.

You answered
our
country's call.



We'll answer
yours.

We're Here for You.

Whether you are in need of immediate assistance or just looking for more information — VA is here for you. Our trained professionals, many of whom are Veterans themselves, are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

TOLL-FREE
1-877-424-3838
(1-877-4AID-VET)

Live 24/7 Chat on VA's Homeless Veterans website,
www.va.gov/homeless



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Created 09/11

- Military service?
- Homeless or at risk of being homeless?

Make the Call!

Call VA's toll-free hotline:

1-877-424-3838
(1-877-4AID-VET)

or visit www.va.gov/homeless for help with housing, jobs, health care, education and other Veteran benefits.

Online chat now available!



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to eliminating homelessness among Veterans. This challenge is being addressed through a range of services and benefits.



Housing and Supportive Services

Partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, VA helps Veterans find safe and affordable housing. To foster lasting success in transitioning homeless Veterans into homes, VA also works with community-based agencies to provide case management and supportive services. Other VA-supported efforts tackle the challenge in innovative ways such as turning unused buildings into new housing for Veterans, and helping low-income Veterans and their families with minor expenses and grants.

Home Loan Guaranty Service

VA urges all Veterans encountering problems making their mortgage payments to speak with their servicers to explore options to avoid foreclosure. Depending on a Veteran's specific situation, servicers may offer options to try and help avoid foreclosure. In cases where the servicer is unable to help the Veteran borrower, VA Loan Guaranty has Loan Technicians in eight Regional Loan Centers and two special servicing centers who take an active role in interceding with the servicer to explore all options to avoid foreclosure.

Prevention Services

VA helps Veterans and their families who are at risk of homelessness stay in their homes or find permanent housing. VA continues its

support by providing funding to community-based, non-profit groups that offer services such as limited rental assistance, childcare, employment training and referrals. VA also reaches out to Veterans in the justice system to link them with needed health care and other services.

Job Training, Employment and Income Benefits

VA offers a variety of job training programs to help homeless Veterans and Veterans at risk of homelessness gain skills that are valued in today's job market. Through VA's compensated work therapy program, homeless Veterans can receive temporary residence in community-based, supervised group homes with paying jobs. Additional benefits that may be available through VA include compensation or pension, vocational rehabilitation and employment services for Veterans who have injuries, illnesses, or diseases related to their active military service.

Education Benefits

Through the GI Bill, VA provides Veterans the opportunity to resume their education or technical training after discharge from the military and provides those who qualify with a monthly living allowance while they pursue their studies.

Medical and Health Treatment Services

VA's medical and mental health clinicians provide eligible homeless Veterans with quality health care, including mental health care, dental care, substance use treatment and other services.

Make The Call

Learn more about VA's services and outreach programs to eliminate Veteran homelessness today. Call our National Call Center for Homeless Veterans toll-free at **1-877-424-3838 (1-877-4AID-VET)**, chat live with supportive and knowledgeable VA staff at www.va.gov/homeless, or explore the website on your own.

VA GUARANTEED HOME LOANS FOR VETERANS

Requirements for VA Loan Approval:

- You must be an eligible veteran who has available home loan entitlement (except in the case of an interest rate reduction refinancing loan)
- The loan must be for an eligible purpose. The purchase price should not exceed the appraised value. Otherwise, you will have to pay the difference from your own resources
- You must occupy or intend to occupy the property as your home within a reasonable period of time after closing the loan
- You must have enough income to meet the new mortgage payments on the loan, cover the costs of owning a home, take care of other obligations and expense, and still have enough income left over for family support (a spouse's income is considered in the same manner as the veteran's); and
- You must have a good credit record

The Guaranty:

- VA guaranteed loans are made by private lenders such as banks, savings and loan associations, or mortgage companies. To get a loan, you apply to the lender. If the loan is approved, VA guarantees the loan when it is closed. The guaranty means the lender is protected against loss if you or a later owner fail to repay the loan.

Service Eligibility:

You are eligible for VA financing if your service falls within any of the following categories -

Wartime Service. You must have served at least 90 days on active duty and been discharged or released under other than dishonorable conditions. If you served less than 90 days, you may be eligible if discharged because of a service-connected disability.

Peacetime Service.

Service between September 7, 1980 (enlisted) or October 16, 1981 (officer) and August 1, 1990.

NOTE: If you fall in this time frame, contact VA Loan Guarantee as further requirements must be met.

Active Duty Service Personnel. If you are now on active duty, eligibility can be established after having served on continuous active duty for at least 90 days. Upon discharge or release from active duty, eligibility must be reestablished.

Members of the Selected Reserve. Individuals who are not otherwise eligible and who have completed at least 6 years in the Reserves or National Guard, or been discharged because of a service-connected disability. **NOTE: Additional restriction apply; contact VA Loan Guarantee for further eligibility requirements.**

Other Types of Service. Certain United States citizens who served in the armed forces of a government allied with the United States during World War II; Unmarried surviving spouses of above referenced (restrictions apply); The spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who is listed as missing in action or a prisoner of war and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days; Individuals with service as members in certain other organizations, services, programs and schools may also be eligible.

Obtaining a Certificate of Eligibility:

VA determines your eligibility and, if you are qualified, a Certificate of Eligibility will be issued.

ACE (automated certificate of eligibility): In some cases veterans can obtain the Certificate of Eligibility from a lender. Most lenders have access to the ACE system. This internet based application can establish eligibility and issue an online Certification of Eligibility in a matter of seconds. Not all cases can be processed through ACE - only those for which VA has sufficient data in our records. However, veterans are encouraged to ask their lenders about this method of obtaining a certificate.

If the certificate cannot be issued by ACE, you can request it from the VA by completing VA Form 26-1880, "Request for a Certificate of Eligibility". This form must be submitted with the most recent and clear copy of DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. These items should be mailed to the following:

Atlanta Regional Loan Center
ATTN: COE (262)
P.O. Box 100034
Decatur, GA 30031

The Eligibility Center also maintains a toll free number for persons seeking information on eligibility.

1 (888) 768-2132

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

What is the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program?

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, USC, Chapter 31 and Code of Federal Regulations, Part 21. It is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. This program assists Veterans with [service-connected disabilities](#) to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, this program offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

Services that may be provided by the VR&E Program include:

- Comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment
- Vocational counseling and rehabilitation planning for employment services
- Employment services such as job-training, job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work readiness assistance
- Assistance finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations
- On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences
- Post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical or business school
- Supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals
- Independent living services for Veterans unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities

Who is Eligible for VR&E Services?

Active Duty Service Members are eligible if they:

- Expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty
- Obtain a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the VA
- Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services

Veterans are eligible if they:

- Have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable
- Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)
- Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services

Basic period of Eligibility

The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E services may be used is 12 years from the latter of the following:

- Date of separation from active military service, or
- Date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating.

The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a [Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor \(VRC\)](#) determines that a Veteran has a [Serious Employment Handicap](#)

What Happens after Eligibility is Established?

The Veteran is scheduled to meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) for a comprehensive evaluation to determine if he / she is [entitled](#) for services. A comprehensive evaluation includes:

- An assessment of the Veteran's interests, aptitudes, and abilities
- An assessment of whether service connected disabilities impair the Veteran's ability to find and / or hold a job using the occupational skills he or she has already developed
- Vocational exploration and goal development leading to employment and / or maximum independence at home and in the Veteran's community

What is an Entitlement Determination?

A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) works with the Veteran to complete a determination if an [employment handicap](#) exists. An employment handicap exists if the Veteran's service connected disability impairs his / her ability to obtain and maintain a job. Entitlement to services is established if the veteran has an employment handicap and is within his or her 12-year

basic period of eligibility and has a 20 % or greater service-connected disability rating.

If the service connected disability rating is less than 20%, or if the Veteran is beyond the 12-year basic period of eligibility, then a serious employment handicap must be found to establish entitlement to VR&E services. A serious employment handicap is based on the extent of services required to help a Veteran to overcome his or her service and non-service connected disabilities permitting the return to suitable employment.

What Happens after the Entitlement Determination is Made?

The Veteran and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) work together to:

- Determine [transferable skills, aptitudes, and interests](#)
- Identify viable employment and / or independent living services options
- Explore labor market and wage information
- Identify physical demands and other job characteristics
- Narrow vocational options to identify a [suitable employment](#) goal
- Select a VR&E program track leading to an employment or independent living goal
- Investigate training requirements
- Identify resources needed to achieve rehabilitation
- Develop an individualized rehabilitation plan to achieve the identified employment and / or independent living goals

What is a Rehabilitation Plan?

A rehabilitation plan is an individualized, written outline of the services, resources and criteria that will be used to achieve employment and / or independent living goals. The plan is an agreement that is signed by the Veteran and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) and is updated as needed to assist the Veteran to achieve his / her goals.

Depending on their circumstances, veterans will work with their VRC to select one of the following five tracks of services [\(see definitions for more detail\)](#):

- Reemployment (with a former employer)
- Direct job placement services for new employment
- Self-employment
- Employment through long term services including OJT, college, and other training
- Independent living services

What Happens after the Rehabilitation Plan is Developed?

After a plan is developed and signed, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) or [case manager](#) will continue to work with the Veteran to implement the plan to achieve suitable employment and / or independent living. The VRC or case manager will provide ongoing counseling, assistance, and coordinate of services such as tutorial assistance, training in job-seeking skills, medical and dental referrals, adjustment counseling, payment of training allowance, if applicable, and other services as required to help the Veteran achieve rehabilitation.

Summary of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (Chapter 31) Process

A VA Veteran who is eligible for an evaluation under Chapter 31 must first apply for services and receive an appointment with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC). The VRC will work with the Veteran to determine if an employment handicap exists as a result of his or her service connected disability. If an employment handicap is established and the Veteran is found entitled to services. The VRC and the Veteran will continue counseling to select a track of services and jointly develop a plan to address the Veteran's rehabilitation and employment needs.

The rehabilitation plan will specify an employment or independent living goal, identify intermediate goals, and outline services and resources that VA will provide to assist the Veteran to achieve his / her goals. The VRC and the Veteran will work together to implement the plan to assist the Veteran to achieve his or her employment and / or independent living goals.

A Veteran found not to be entitled to services, the VRC will help him or her locate other resources to address any rehabilitation and employment needs identified during the evaluation. Referral to other resources may include state vocational rehabilitation programs; Department of Labor employment programs for disabled veterans; state, federal or local agencies providing services for employment or small business development; internet-based resources for rehabilitation and employment; and information about applying for financial aid.

VA FORMS INCLUDED IN THIS BOOKLET

****NOTE** Forms are frequently updated - visit www.va.gov/forms to be sure you have the most recent version**

VA FORM 10-10EZ

Application for Health Benefits

VA FORM 10-8678

Application for Annual Clothing Allowance

VA FORM 21-22

Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative

VA FORM 21-526EZ

Application for Disability Compensation and Related
Compensation Benefits

VA FORM 21-527EZ

Application for Pension

VA FORM 21P-530

Application for Burial Benefits

VA FORM 21-534EZ

Application for DIC, Death Pension and/or
Accrued Benefits

VA FORM 27-2008

Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes

VA FORM 40-0247

Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form

VA FORM 40-1330

Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker

VA FORM 40-1330M

Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in
a Private Cemetery

**ADDITIONAL FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE VA WEBSITE
AT WWW.VA.GOV/FORMS**