

# Veterans' Benefits

## Timetable

**Burial Benefits:-Time limits vary:-** VA provides certain burial benefits, including interment in a national cemetery, partial reimbursement for burial expenses, flag to drape the casket, and a government headstone or grave marker. The veteran must have been in receipt of VA compensation or pension or died in a VA medical center before VA will pay partial reimbursement for burial expenses.

**Dental Treatment:-90 days:-** Application may be made to VA for one-time dental treatment for certain dental conditions and must apply within 90 days of separation, or at any time for a service-connected dental injury or disability.

**Disability Compensation:-No time limit:-** VA pays compensation for disability associated with or aggravated by military service. Evidence will be needed showing a relationship between the disability and the veterans service in the armed forces **(800) 827 1000**

**Disabled Veterans Insurance:-(RH):-** Veterans granted service-connected disability may apply within 2 years, rating, for \$10,000 of life insurance at standard insurance rates.

**GI Home Loan:-No time limit:-** VA will guarantee a loan for the purchase of a home, mobile home, or condominium, make certain home improvements, or loan refinancing. Eligibility may be reestablished following repayment of original GI loan and to "cash out" refinancing of home. Eligible veterans also include Reservists and National Guard members with at least 6 years service [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov)

**Readjustment Counseling:-No time limit:-** Available at VA Vet Centers or medical facilities to combat era veterans to assist in readjusting to civilian life.

**Medical Care:-No time limit:-** To receive health care, veterans generally must be enrolled with VA. A veteran may apply for enrollment at any time. Veterans do not have to be enrolled if they: (1) have a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more; (2) want care for a compensable disability during the 12-month period following discharge; or (3) want care for a service-connected disability.

**Veterans Educational Assistance Programs:-** 10 years from date of separation or discharge from service. VA pays monthly education assistance benefits, depending on the various programs for active duty, Reservists and National Guard member [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

**Veterans Preference in Employment:-No time limit:-** To aid veterans in finding employment in private industry, and federal, state or local government.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:-Time limit:-** Generally, 12 years from date of notification of entitlement to compensation, with minimum 20% rating required or 10% if they have a serious employment handicap based on the service-connected disability. Extension possible under certain conditions. VA pays for tuition, books, and other expenses, a monthly living allowance, and provides employment assistance.

**Power of Attorney:-No time limit:-** Claimants may designate a veterans service organization as their accredited representative for the purpose of assisting in the development and filing of claims. May be changed at any time, except if the case is on appeal.

**Discharge Review:-** 15 years or less from date of separation from military service.

**Correction of Military Records:-** 3 years or less from date of discharge, or from date of becoming aware of injustices in service records. The 3 year filing period may be expanded with good cause or following denial by the Discharge Review Board.

**Gulf War Benefits:-** PL 103-446 provides for compensation to Gulf War veterans on a presumptive basis for undiagnosed illnesses which may be a result of their wartime service. Gulf veterans may also request to be placed on VA's Gulf Registry and receive an examination and treatment **(800) PGW.VETS**

## Filing for a Benefit

Application for any benefit requires the submission of the proper VA form and the necessary supporting evidence. **Before filing the application form and any evidence with VA, consult an American Legion Department Service Officer at the nearest VA regional office (RO) for advice and assistance.** Correspondence to VA indicating an intent to apply for a benefit will initiate the claims process and the required form being sent to you. It is important the application form be fully completed. Failure to provide requested information can result in a delay in processing or possibly the denial of the claim. If a claim is denied, you have one year to file an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) in Washington, D.C. American Legion National Appeals Representatives located at the BVA provide representation for Legion represented claims that are denied at the RO and appealed to the BVA.

## Eligibility

The benefits to which you are entitled are based on the particular period of service you served and your type of discharge. "Honorable" and "General Under Honorable Conditions" discharges qualify you as eligible for benefits. "Dishonorable" and certain "Bad Conduct" discharges issued by general courts martial are a bar to VA benefits (See "Review of Discharges"). "Bad Conduct" and "Other Than Honorable" discharges administratively issued by your branch of service may or may not qualify an individual for benefits, depending on a determination by the VA based on the facts of each case. The main consideration is whether the veteran was discharged from service under "dishonorable conditions" or "other than honorable conditions."

Anyone who has a discharge prohibiting benefits may seek assistance in filing for a VA review of eligibility. This assistance from a VA benefits counselor or duly recognized veterans organization (**like The American Legion**) is provided free of charge.

The law now generally denies benefits to anyone entering military service after September 8, 1980, unless the following requirements are met: (1) 24 months of continuous active duty or (2) served the full period for which an individual was committed, whichever is shorter. This requirement does not apply to those released with a service-connected disability. **If there is any question, consult your local American Legion Service Officer or a VA Benefits Counselor.**