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VA spotlights special benefits for elderly wartime Veteran population

WASHINGTON — As a follow up to National Financial Awareness Day, Aug. 14, the Department of Veterans Affairs is launching an awareness campaign to inform elderly wartime Veterans and their families of their lesser-known pension, funeral, burial and survivor benefits.

“VA’s pension benefit helps Veterans and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income,” said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. “Currently, only 189,800 wartime Veterans and 139,800 surviving spouses are using their needs-based pension benefits that are meant to ease the burden on them, their families and caregivers. We need to ensure all of our wartime Veterans and their survivors are aware of their benefits.”

The following benefits are available through VA’s [Pension and Fiduciary Service](#) for use in planning and preparing for the future.

- VA [pension](#) is payable to wartime Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to non-service connected disability, or who are age 65 years old or older, and who meet certain income and net worth limits.
- [Special monthly pension](#) is an additional benefit for Veterans in receipt of pension who are housebound, require the aid and attendance of another person to help them with daily activities (such as eating, bathing and dressing), have very limited eyesight or require nursing home care.
- For surviving spouses, there are two types of benefits P&F Service offers. [Survivors Pension](#) provides monthly payments to qualified surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children of wartime Veterans who meet certain income and net worth limits. Special monthly pension is also available to surviving spouses who are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person.
- [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#) is available to dependents and parents and generally is not based on income and assets (except the income limits apply to parents). DIC is a monthly monetary benefit paid to a surviving spouse, child or parent of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, or when an active-duty service member dies in the line of duty. Special monthly DIC is also available to surviving spouses who are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person.
- A surviving spouse of a Veteran who served on a Blue Water Navy vessel offshore of the Republic of Vietnam, or on another U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship operating in the coastal waterways of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, may be eligible for DIC benefits — [even if they were previously denied](#).
- VA’s [funeral and burial benefits](#) are available for both service-related and non-service-related deaths. New regulations allow a flat-rate burial and plot or interment allowance with decreased paperwork and maximum payment permitted by law.
- For those interested in burial benefits such as a Presidential Memorial Certificate, burial flag, headstone or marker, the [National Cemetery Administration](#) has information about pre-need eligibility.

Many vulnerable senior wartime Veterans are targeted with misinformation. In many cases, this is because they are not fully aware of their benefits, which increases the chances of them being taken advantage of and/or defrauded.

VA encourages elderly wartime Veterans and their family members to consult a [VA-accredited representative](#) if they want or need help filing a claim. They are reminded to beware of individuals or companies that promise benefits or ask for money upfront, as only VA can make final determinations on [eligibility](#).

[Factsheets](#) are available to assist Veterans with limited resources. [Pension eligibility information](#) has details on how Veterans and their families can get help filing their claim for free.

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