

GILLESPIE COUNTY



VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE



**TAMI KING, VETERANS SERVICE
OFFICER/DEPARTMENT HEAD**

MARCH 2024

Veteran Service Office **Employees**

Tami King

Gillespie County Veterans Service Officer
Department Head
U. S. Navy, Retired

*VA Accredited Representative - Texas Veterans Commission,
VFW, American Legion & National County Veterans Service Officers
Association*

(Start Date: 13 March 2007 – Retiring 30 Sep 2024)

Ryan White

Assistant, County Veterans Service Officer
U.S. Navy, Retired (Start Date: 7 Aug 2023)

VA Accredited Representative - Texas Veterans Commission

Veterans Service Office

NEW Location as of April 2021

Gillespie County Annex 3

95 Frederick Rd., Suite 200

Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Tele: 830-997-3758 (FAX) 830-997-3245

**Email: tking@gillespiecounty.org or
rwhite@gillespiecounty.org**

Monday – Friday: Call for appointment

This is a Gillespie County Office and we are restricted to clients who reside in Gillespie County.

GILLESPIE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

As of 30 Sep 2022

- **Veterans population: 2,300** (not included in total: Veterans and Surviving Spouses that do not use VA Health Care or who do not receive VA monetary payments)
- **Annual Amount paid to Veterans & Surviving Spouses for Compensation or Pension:**

\$15,359,000.00

(Monies that go into the pockets of Veterans & Families)

Annual Amount expended on VA Healthcare for Veterans:

\$9,987,000.00

TOTAL VA EXPENDITURES FOR GILLESPIE COUNTY:

\$26,019,000.00

SPOUSES OF VETERANS

(VETERANS TELL YOUR SPOUSE & CHILDREN
EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO KNOW)

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW ABOUT YOUR VETERAN
SPOUSE??

WHAT IF YOUR VETERAN SPOUSE HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH A
DEBILITATING DISEASE OR HAS HAD A STROKE? WHAT WILL YOU
DO?

DOCUMENTS & INFORMATION

- **Gather copies of: All DD-214's; Copies of Service Records and Service Treatment Records; Copies of Award Citations; Flight Logs; Marriage Certificate**
- **Make a list of every duty station and the dates they were stationed there, including TAD/TDY (find orders or flight logs, etc).**
- **If Retired Military: Copy of current statement; Is there an election for the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP); Who is identified on the Arrears of Pay designation; Do you have access or know the password for the MyPay Account;**

VA BENEFITS-DISABILITY COMPENSATION

- **If the Veteran has a Disability Rating, do you know what their Service-Connected Disabilities are?**
- **If the SC disabilities have worsened, has the Veteran filed for Increases or Secondary conditions**
- **Based on where the Veteran was stationed or deployed to: Do you know what medical conditions are associated with that service due to exposure, etc (Herbicide (multiple countries), PACT Act Gulf & GWOT, Camp Lejeune, Radiation, Asbestos.**
- **Did the Veteran have any accidents or injuries on active duty, or diagnosed with any chronic medical conditions?**
- **Do you have a list of ALL prior Marital information for Veteran & Spouse?
Dates/Locations of Marriage & Death/Divorce & Names**

SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

- Veterans Disabilities Rated at:

30% or higher - Additional payment for Dependents (Spouse, children, etc). If Dependent Status changes (Death, Divorce, Birth, Marriage) must notify the VA immediately to avoid a large debt.

10% or higher: If you own a home in Texas, are you receiving the Property Tax Exemption (2 Laws)

100% or IU and Permanent & Total – Dependents eligible for ChampVA (not eligible if you are eligible for Tricare)

0% - Service-Connected

70% or higher - Additional benefits with the VA Health System: Long Term Care, Family Caregiver Program

30% or higher – Spouse eligible for Aid & Attendance (extra money in disability compensation)

RETIRED MILITARY & VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

- If Veteran is Rated at 40% or less, the VA Disability Compensation amount reduces the Gross Retired Military Pay.
- If Veteran is Rated at 50% or higher, the Veteran receives BOTH full Retired Pay and full VA Disability Compensation.
- Retired Pay is taxable
- VA Disability is tax free.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE ON THE VETERAN'S DEATH CERTIFICATE ??

1. SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY THAT IS THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY OR CONTRIBUTING CAUSE OF DEATH.
2. IF CAUSE OF DEATH IS UNKNOWN, MAY NEED AN AUTOPSY.

VA NON-SERVICE CONNECTED PENSION

- **Veteran must have one day of Wartime Service**
- **Income and Asset Based Program**
- **Helps Veterans & Spouse OR Surviving Spouse pay for care:
Home Care, Assisted Living or Nursing Home**

Veteran can be eligible for VA Service-Connected Disability and the VA Pension Program, but will only receive the benefit that pays the highest amount.

VA HEALTH CARE

- **Is the Veteran enrolled in VA health care or are they eligible? Not all Veterans are eligible.**
- **If enrolled, is there a Health Care Power of Attorney on file so you can speak to the VA physicians or inquire about medication refills.**
- **Does the Veteran have a MyHealthEVet account to access their VA health care, reorder prescriptions, print VA medical records and send secure messages to the VA Primary Care Physician? Do you have access to this account?**
- **50% SC or higher: No Copays - everything is free**
- **Are Health Care Power of Attorney and Health Directive on file with the VA health system AND all Private doctors and Hospitals??**

VA HEALTH CARE - CONT.

- Do you understand how the VA health system works?
- If the **Veteran is 70% Service Connected or higher** what is the Veteran eligible for:
 1. Long Term Care either provided or paid for by the VA health system.
 2. Family Caregiver Program: Family member can be paid to care for the Veteran at home. Paid \$1,000 - \$2,000 per month plus health insurance
 3. Levels of Care: Primary Care Team, GEM Team, Home Based Primary Care

If Veteran is 100% or Individual Unemployability: Free Dental Care

OTHER HEALTH ISSUES

- **COUNTY VSO's AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO VA HEALTH INFORMATION**
- **Do you have a Long-Term Care Policy:** How long is the policy? What levels of care does it provide (Home Care, Assisted Living, Nursing Home)? What are the monetary limits of the policy?
- **If Retired Military:** Do you understand how Tricare and Express Scripts work? What happens when you turn age 65 and it requires you enroll in Medicare Part B and you now have Tricare for Life? Do you have accounts set-up for both of you for Tricare and Express Scripts?

MEET WITH A VSO

- **Set up a file with your local County VSO**
- **Review Benefits**
- **Build the file for future claims**
- **Make sure you understand Texas State Veterans Benefits: Property Tax discounts; Disabled Veteran License Plates; Free Driver License; Free access to State Parks; Free Hunting & Fishing License: All depends on SC disability percentage**
- **Do you understand VA Burial Benefits: Set up a file with a local funeral home (can pre-pay); National Cemetery burial options; Monetary burial benefits; Headstones & Markers; Military Honors; Presidential Memorial Certificate**



SURVIVOR BENEFITS

**MAKE SURE YOU ALREADY KNOW THESE
BENEFITS LONG BEFORE THE VETERAN DIES**

WHAT TO DO WHEN A VETERAN DIES

- **Make sure you already have a file with a VSO office. This will allow the VSO office to make the notifications to: VA Benefits, VA Health Care and DFAS for Retired Military**
- **The Funeral Home notifies Social Security**
- **The Surviving Spouse/Family must notify all other agencies**
- **Confirm with the VSO office the cause of death. If you previously met with a VSO, there may be SC disabilities that should listed on the DEATH CERTIFICATE as primary or secondary or contributing conditions to the death**

BENEFITS FOR SURVIVING SPOUSE IF VETERAN HAD DISABILITY COMPENSATION

- **REMEMBER ALL VA MONIES STOP**
- **If a payment is made on the first of the month after the Veteran dies, you owe the money back to the VA**
- **Month of Death Payment (if receiving VA monies);**
- **Substitution of Claimant if there was a pending claim;**
- **Accrued Claim if there were funds due a Veteran before they died.**
- **Month of Death & Non-SC Burial may be auto-processed by the VA**

FUNERAL HOME

- **Funeral Homes coordinate the preparation: Embalmed & casketed, or cremation. If the Veteran is eligible for monetary VA benefits: Must have the long-itemized receipt and a separate receipt that shows the amount paid in full.**
- **The funeral home will coordinate the Military Honors with local organizations (Gillespie County Honor Guard) or with an active-duty unit (availability based on when they are available and funding of the unit).**
- **They must have the DD-214 to arrange for Honor Guards or to request burial in a National Cemetery.**
- **Establish a file with a Funeral Home with your selections and a copy of your DD-214 and tell them you are a Disabled Veteran.**

NATIONAL CEMETERY

- **Veteran and Spouse are eligible to be buried at a National Cemetery. Buried in the same hole or columbarium. Burial and Headstone or Markers are free.**
- **Veteran & Spouse can request pre-authorization to be buried at a National Cemetery so that you know you are eligible. You cannot reserve a spot in any of the National Cemeteries.**
- **If the Veteran wants to be buried at sea, or cremains scattered, you can order a Marker to be placed at a National Cemetery.**
- **Each cemetery has groups that provide Military Honors.**
- **Service at the Cemetery: 30 minutes at a covered Pavilion or graveside which is restricted to 6 persons.**

SCHEDULE APPOINTMENT WITH VSO

- **Bring to your appointment: Death Certificate. If applicable: 2 receipts for the Funeral Home and if buried at a private cemetery, receipts for the burial plot.**
- **There may be other documents if you do not have an established file with a VSO office.**
- **VSO Office will evaluate what benefits you are entitled to.**
- **VSO Office will have made the appropriate notifications if there is an office file on the Veteran.**

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC)

Tax free monetary benefit generally payable to a surviving spouse, child, or parent of Service members who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training, or survivors of Veterans who died from their service-connected disabilities.

DIC VETERAN REQUIREMENTS

- **Died on active duty, or**
- **From a Service-Connected disability (direct or contributory), or**
- **Rated 100% or Individual Unemployability Service-Connected for 10 years or more (May be payable in Non-Service Connected Death Cases: 10 Year Rule (38 C.F.R. §3.22(2)(i)), or**
- **Rated 100% from time of discharge, or**
- **From improper VA Medical treatment**
- **Must be Other than Dishonorable Discharge, or**
- **In the Line of Duty, or**
- **Not due to own Willful Misconduct, or**
- **Not due to Wrongful Death (spouse cannot murder Veteran!)**

DIC DEPENDENCY REQUIREMENTS

- **Spouse:**

- **Validity of Marriage**
- **Common Law recognized in certain states**
- **Continuous Cohabitation**
- **Married for at least one year or longer**

- **Children:**

- **Under age 18, or**
- **Age 18 to 23: enrolled in full-time school, or**
- **Helpless Child**

**DIC SURVIVING SPOUSE RATES IF THE VETERAN DIED
ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 1993, OR DUE TO A
SERVICE-CONNECTED CAUSE OF DEATH:**

2024 RATES:

- **BASIC: \$1,612.75**
- **ENHANCED: ADD \$342.46**
- **CHILD ALLOWANCES**
- **AID & ATTENDANCE: ADD \$399.54 (Needing assistance with
bathing, dressing and medication management)**

DIC AND RETIRED MILITARY SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN

Effective January 1, 2023, there is no longer an offset between DIC and SBP for Surviving Spouses.

VA SURVIVOR PENSION ELIGIBILITY

- Veteran's service *must have been at least one day during a period of war.*
- Cause of death *was not* service-connected.
- Survivor's Pension is an "Income-Based and Asset Based" program for Surviving Spouses and Children.
- All monies are tax free

COUNTABLE INCOME

- Earnings
- Retirements/Annuities/ or Survivors Benefits
- Interest/Dividends
- Unemployment Compensation
- Business/Farm Income
- Life Insurance Proceeds
- Inheritances/Gifts/ and Gambling Winnings
- Royalty payments for delay rental or bonus payments
- Long Term Care Payments

NON-COUNTABLE INCOME

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Work Restoration Programs through VHA
- Income Tax Refunds / Economic Stimulus Payments
- Mineral Royalties
- Loans or Reverse Mortgages
- Interest from US Savings Bonds Redemptions

VA PENSION NET WORTH

- All real and personal property, including life estates, but excluding the claimant's primary residence (single family unit) and personal affects for a reasonable mode of life.
- From December 1, 2023, to November 30, 2024, the net worth limit to be eligible for Survivors Pension benefits is \$155,356.

DEATH OF RETIRED MILITARY VETERAN & DEPENDENTS

1. NOTIFY DFAS (VSO WILL DO THIS IF AN ESTABLISHED CLIENT)
2. SURVIVING SPOUSE NOTIFY: DEERS, TRICARE & TRICARE FOR LIFE & EXPRESS SCRIPTS
3. CHANGE ALLOTMENTS THAT MAY NEED TO BE CHANGED TO A NEW PAY AUTHORIZATION (DENTAL INSURANCE, ETC.)
3. APPLY FOR SBP-SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (IF ELECTED) & ARREARS OF PAY;
4. OBTAIN A NEW SURVIVOR DEPENDENT ID CARD

QUESTIONS ??

