



# RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County  
Unified Family Services  
Veterans Service Agency  
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County Executive

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## WHAT IS VA PENSION?

Pension is a needs-based benefit paid to wartime Veterans, who meet certain age or non-service connected disability requirements.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

You may be eligible if:

- You were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, **AND**
- You served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war time\*, **AND**
- Your countable income is below the maximum annual pension rate (MAPR), **AND**
- You meet the net worth limitations, **AND**
- You are age 65 or older, **OR**, you have a permanent and total non-service connected disability, **OR**, you are patient in a nursing home, **OR** you are receiving Social Security disability benefits.

\*Veterans who entered active duty after September 7, 1980, must also serve at least 24 months of active duty service. If the total length of service is less than 24 months, the Veteran must have completed their entire tour of active duty.

### HOW MUCH DOES VA PAY?

VA calculates annual pension by first determining for your particular circumstances that Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR), an amount set by Congress. For example, if you are a Veteran with no dependents, the MAPR is \$13,166. Next, VA determines your countable income. VA determines countable income by subtracting from your total income received in a particular 12-month period, the amount of those exclusions provided by law. VA subtracts your countable income from the MAPR; the difference is your annual pension entitlement. VA divides this amount by 12 and rounds down to the nearest dollar, this is the approximate amount of your monthly pension payment.

VA deducts certain expenses paid by you, e.g., unreimbursed medical expenses, from your annual household income, which will decrease your countable income and increase your monthly pension.

### Van Transportation...

- \* Don't drive and need to get to the Albany VA Medical Center ?
- \* We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC for *most morning* medical appointments.

For more details call:  
270-2760.



### VETERANS CRISIS LINE

1-800-273-8255  
PRESS 1

**\*\*Confidential chat at Veterans CrisisLine.net or text to 838255\*\***  
TTY service 1-800-799-4889

Confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, for veterans and their loved ones.

## SURVIVORS PENSION

The Survivors Pension benefit, which may also be referred to as Death Pension, is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.

### Eligibility

The deceased Veteran must have met the following service requirements:

For service on or before September 7, 1980, the Veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, with at least one day during a [war time period](#).

If he or she entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally he or she must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty with at least one day during a [war time period](#).

- Was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions.

Survivors Pension is also based on your [yearly family income](#), which must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify.

While an un-remarried spouse is eligible at any age, a child of a deceased wartime Veteran must be:

- Under 18, OR
  - Under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, OR
  - Permanently incapable of self-support due to a disability before age 18
- 
- Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the Survivors Pension benefit.

## New York State Blind Annuity Program

The Blind Annuity Program benefit is for legally blind wartime Veterans, or surviving un-remarried spouses of legally blind wartime Veterans, who live and are domiciled in New York State. Blindness need not be a service-connected disability.

**Eligibility:** A qualifying Veteran must be a New York State resident and domiciliary who is determined to be legally blind (20/200 vision in the better eye with best correction, or has 20- degree limitation of field of vision), and who served on active duty during specific wartime periods or received an expeditionary medal for certain conflicts. Generally, the Veteran must have served at least 90 days active duty for other than training purposes. However, fewer than 90 days active duty is acceptable if the Veteran was discharged for a service-connected disability.

To demonstrate New York State residency, a Veteran or un-remarried surviving spouse of a Veteran must submit a copy (no original needed) of one authoritative document showing proof of residency in New York.

**Acceptable documents include:** a New York State driver's license or non-driver ID card; a voter registration notification card; a current utility bill (such as water, electricity, trash collection, cable TV, etc.) listing the applicant's name and address; a proof of your current mortgage; a residential lease issued within one year of the current date; a property tax or school tax bill or receipt for the current year; an assisted-living facility or nursing home statement; a federal or New York State income tax W-2 form; a federal or New York State income tax or earning statement; or any other official document showing your current status as a New York State resident.

If a Veteran met all the criteria for the Blind Annuity benefit, but never actually received the benefit during his or her lifetime, the un-remarried surviving spouse of that Veteran may still be eligible to receive the benefit.

U.S. ARMY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND  
AWARDS AND DECORATIONS BRANCH

**Application for Cold War Recognition Certificate**

**PRINT THE APPLICATION, SIGN, ATTACH A COPY OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND MAIL TO THE ADDRESS LISTED BELOW**

**Instructions:** Fill out this application and mail with supporting documentation to the U.S Army Human Resources Command, Awards and Decorations Branch with your proof of service.

**Acceptable Documents:** To receive a certificate, you must submit supporting documentation that demonstrates Honorable service. An acceptable supporting document includes any official government or military document that contains the recipient's name, Social Security Number or Military Service Number or Foreign Service Number, and a date showing at least one day of service during the Cold War era (September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991). Example: DD Form 214 (Report of Separation).

**DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS**

You must certify your honorable service by signing and dating the application and returning it with a copy of supporting documents to:

USAHRC  
Cold War Recognition Program  
Attn: AHRC-PDP-A, Dept 480  
1600 Spearhead Division Avenue  
Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408

Awardee Name (First, MI, Last): \_\_\_\_\_

Or

Requestor's Name (If it is not the Awardee): \_\_\_\_\_

Military Service Number or SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province/Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Awardee or Requestor Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Awardee or Requestor Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm my (or the recipient's) faithful and honorable service to the nation during the Cold War Era.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### A Message from the County Executive

Rensselaer County has endeavored to never forget the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families. From the Revolution, through the Civil War, to World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam, and today's wars against terror, Rensselaer County residents have always answered the call to duty and stood on the front lines of freedom.

Their courage, service and sacrifice have enabled all of us to enjoy freedom, security and prosperity in a country that remains a bright beacon of freedom throughout the world. Thank you does not go far enough in recognizing the enormous contribution made by our veterans and their families.

As County Executive, I am honored to join with Chair of the Legislature Mike Stammel and others to recognize our veterans at various events, ceremonies and parades. This Memorial Day was especially meaningful, as a number of hometown heroes were recognized in their communities for their military service and heroism.

To ensure you are able to enjoy the freedom you fought and served for, our county Veterans Service Agency stands ready to assist and provide guidance and support. Director Peter Goebel and his staff work closely with veteran service providers at the federal and state levels to ensure veterans receive service and care if needed. My staff and I also stand ready to provide any help or information you may need. Your service helped build and defend this country, and we look forward to any opportunity to serve you as you served all of us.

Sincerely,

Steven F. McLaughlin

### Upcoming Events:



*Call us at (518) 270-2760 to have your event listed in the newsletter.*

July 9th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

*Joseph P. Mangione, Jr., USA, SP4-CWE*

August 4th...2018 Honor Our Vets Car & Motorcycle Show at Albany Stratton VAMC, 10am-3pm (Rain Date August 5th)

August 13th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

*Ronald J. Welsh, USA/ARNG, Sgt.-CWE & Persian Gulf*

August 29th-September 3rd...Schaghticoke Fair-come see us at our table

September 3rd...**LABOR DAY- OFFICE CLOSED**

September 10th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

*Thomas E. Hendry, Jr., USA, Cpl.-WWII*

September 13th...60th Annual Uncle Sam Graveside Ceremony at Uncle Sam's gravesite in Oakwood Cemetery @ 6pm. Info 518-221-3428

September 15th... Heroes at Home Patriot Ruckmarch at Sullivan Jones VFW Post, Poestenkill, NY. For info call (518)235-2173

September 29th...Patriot Flight, for more info: (518)439-9265 [fomservice@aol.com](mailto:fomservice@aol.com) or (518)795-0665 [bdmendini@yahoo.com](mailto:bdmendini@yahoo.com)

October 8th...**COLUMBUS DAY—OFFICE CLOSED**

October 9th... Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

*Edmond W. Miaski, USA, SP4-CWE & Herman W. Miaski, USA, Pfc.-WWII*