

# VA Survivors Benefits

Cindy Smith  
VFW Volunteer Service Officer  
[serviceofficer.vfw5337@gmail.com](mailto:serviceofficer.vfw5337@gmail.com)



# Agenda

- Monthly monetary benefits
- Education benefits
- Burial and memorial benefits
- Health care benefits
- Camp Lejeune Family Member Program
- Bereavement counseling
- State property tax exemption



# Who is a surviving spouse?

- Validly married to the Veteran/service member at the time of death for
  - At least one year OR
  - Within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the Veteran's death began or was aggravated, OR
  - Had a child with the Veteran AND cohabited with the Veteran continuously until the Veteran's death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, AND
- Is not currently remarried\*\*

\*\*A surviving spouse who remarries on or after December 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, is entitled to continue to receive DIC.



# Who is a surviving child?

- Unmarried, AND
- Under age 18, or between the ages of 18 and 23 and attending school.



# Monthly Monetary Benefits

- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Survivors Pension





# Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

- Service member died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training **OR**
- Veteran died from an injury or disease deemed to be related to military service **OR**
- The Veteran was rated as totally disabling for
  - At least 10 years immediately before death
  - Since the Veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death
  - For at least one year before death if the Veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999



# Survivors Pension

- \* Countable Income limit
  - \* Income can be reduced by medical expenses
- \* Service requirements
  - \* Veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, with at least one day during a war time period.\*
  - \* The Veteran 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.\*\*
  - \* The Veteran discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions.

\*Before 9/7/1980, \*\*After 9/7/1980



# Wartime Service

- World War II: 12/7/1941 through 12/31/1946
- Korean Conflict: 6/27/1950 through 1/31/1955
- Vietnam War: 8/5/1964 through 5/7/1975, although veterans who served in Vietnam itself (“in country”) as early as 2/28/1961 may also qualify.
- Gulf War: 8/2/1990 to date to be determined by U.S. government



# Housebound

- Extension of the Monthly Monetary Benefit (DIC or Survivors Pension)
- Claimant is confined to immediate premises or home because of permanent disability
- Being in an assistant living facility applies



# Aid and Attendance

- Extension of the Monthly Monetary Benefit (DIC or Survivors Pension)
- Claimant requires the aid of another person to preform personal function required in everyday living (bathing, feeding, dressing etc.) OR
- Is bedridden OR
- Is a patient in a nursing home OR
- Is legally blind



# Survivors Pension Annual Rates\*

Without Dependent Child	\$8,630
With One Dependent Child**	\$11,296
Housebound Without Dependents	\$10,548
Housebound With One Dependent	\$13,209
A&A Without Dependents	\$13,794
A&A With One Dependent	\$16,456

\*Based on 12/1/2014, changed every December

\*\*Add \$2,198 for each additional child



# Month of Death Check

- If Veteran is receiving a check from the VA, the surviving spouse is eligible for the month of death check
- It is not always automatic and may require an application so the check is issued in the surviving spouse's name.
- It can cause an overpayment if the VA does not take the money back



# Accrued benefits

- Accrued benefits is money that is owed to the Veteran for a period prior to death. It usually results from a existing rating or pending claim that in process prior to the Veteran's death.
- Generally, accrued benefits are payable to the surviving spouse. If there is no surviving spouse, then the surviving children are paid accrued benefits in equal shares.



# Substitutions

- Pending claims for benefits use to end with the Veteran's death, but the substitution law allows to continue under some circumstances. The relative of the deceased Veteran, who would have been a dependent beneficiary, may file a claim to substitute for the deceased Veteran and continue the process of completing the claim.
- The request must be filed with the VA no later than year after the Veteran's death.
- Substitution allows new evidence to be considered.



# Education Benefits

- Dependents Education Assistance Program
- Fry Scholarship





# Dependents Education Assistance Program

Education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition OR of Veterans who died while on active duty OR as a result of a service-related condition.





# Fry Scholarship

- \* The Fry Scholarship is available for children and surviving spouses of Service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.
- \* Survivor spouse has a 15 Year time limit from date of service member's death
- \* Children eligibility ends on 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday.





# Health Benefits

- CHAMPVA
- Camp Lejeune Family Member (CLFM) Program





# CHAMPVA

- \* The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) is a comprehensive health care program in which the VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries.
- \* CHAMPVA provides coverage to the spouse or widow(er) and to the children of a Veteran who:
  - \* is rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability, or
  - \* was rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service connected condition at the time of death, or
  - \* died of a service-connected disability, or
  - \* died on active duty and the dependents are not eligible for Department of Defense TRICARE benefits.



# Camp Lejeune Family Member (CLFM) Program

- \* From August 1, 1953, through December 31, 1987, people living at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene, and other chemicals.
- \* Public Law 112-154 requires the VA to provide health care to Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune and to reimburse eligible CLFM for eligible health care costs related to one or more of **15 specified illnesses or conditions**.



# Camp Lejeune Family Member (CLFM) Program

## The 15 Specified illness/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



# Camp Lejeune Family Member (CLFM) Program

You meet the criteria for the CLFM Program

- \* **If the Veteran** was on active duty and served at Camp Lejeune for **30 days** or more between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987
- \* **AND** you were the spouse or dependent of the Veteran during that same period
- \* **AND** you lived (or were in utero) on Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987



# Camp Lejeune Family Member (CLFM) Program

- \* The CLFMP will only cover hospital care and medical services that are determined to be medically necessary and appropriate for the covered condition.
- \* Basic care associated with the 15 Camp Lejeune covered conditions typically includes: outpatient medical, surgical, and mental health care; Inpatient hospital, medical, surgical, and mental health care; prescription drugs, medical, and surgical supplies; emergency care; durable medical equipment including prosthetic and orthotic devices; skilled nursing care, homemaker, and home health services when provided by a certified practitioner and clinically required by one of the covered conditions; reconstructive (plastic) surgery required as a result of a covered condition; palliative care (including hospice); and non-institutional or institutional respite care; ambulatory surgery and transplants.
- \* VA may not reimburse for Camp Lejeune related care prior to **March 26, 2013**, the date when Congress provided funding to CLFMP



# Burial & Memorial Benefits

- Burial Benefits
- Headstones, Marker, and medallions
- Presidential Memorial Certificates
- Burial Flags





# Burial in a National Cemetery

- \* There are 131 VA national cemeteries through out the United States
- \* Arrangements for burial in the VA national cemeteries are made at the time of death (no pre death arrangement available)
- \* The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs has 5 cemeteries and pre death arrangements are available based on Veteran's residence
- \* Arlington National Cemetery is not a VA cemetery so arrangements must be made directly with US Department of the Army
- \* The VA does not provide burial at sea. The burial at sea program is managed by the US Navy Mortuary Affairs Office



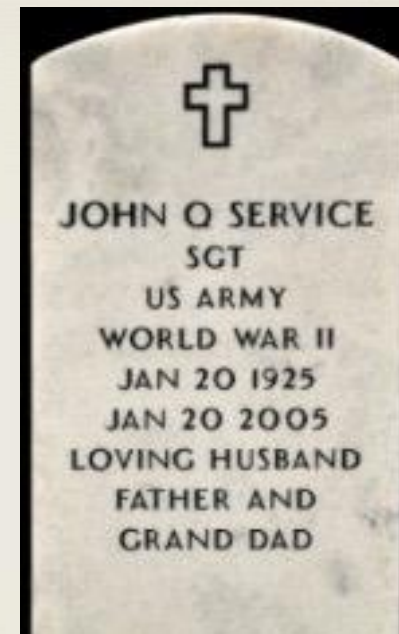
# Burial Allowance

- \* Service Connected Death If the Veteran died on or after September 11, 2001, the maximum service-connected burial allowance is \$2,000. If the Veteran died before September 11, 2001, the maximum service-connected burial allowance is \$1,500.
- \* Non Service Connected Death
  - \* If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2014, VA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$745 for a plot.
  - \* If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2013, but before October 1, 2014, VA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$734 for a plot.
  - \* If the Veteran died on or after October 1, 2012, but before October 1, 2013, VA will pay a \$300 burial allowance and \$722 for a plot.



# Headstones, Markers, and Medallions

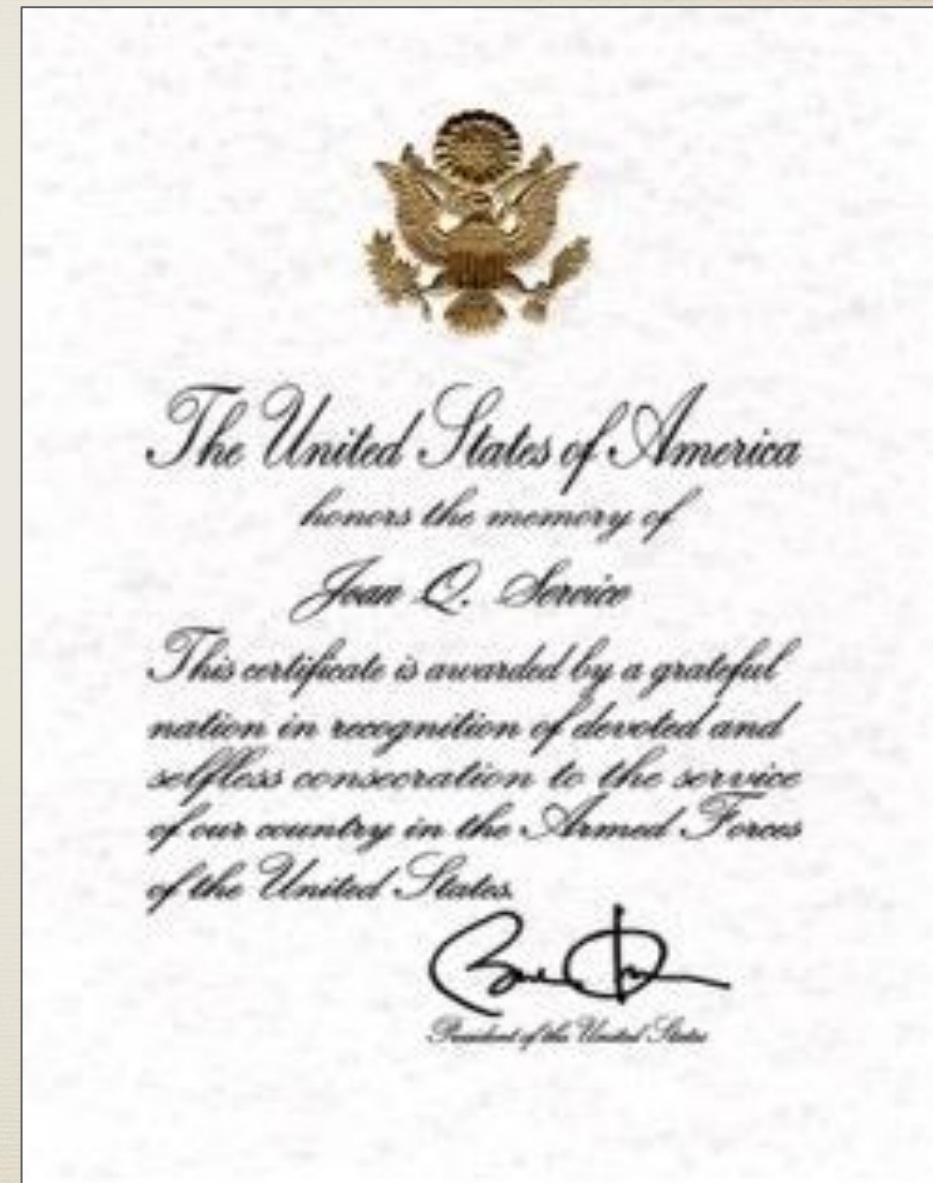
The VA furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible Veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death. The VA may also furnish a headstone or marker for graves that are marked with a private headstone or marker, for Veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990.





# Presidential Memorial Certificates

- \* A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans.
- \* Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased Veterans.
- \* More than one certificate may be provided.





# Burial Flags

- \* A flag is given to the next-of-kin, as a keepsake, after its use during the funeral service.
- \* U.S. Post Offices are the primary issuing point for burial flags. Generally, the funeral director can help you obtain a flag.
- \* **Only one** flag is provided per Veteran





# Bereavement Counseling

- Bereavement counseling is assistance and support to people with emotional and psychological stress after the death of a loved one.
- Community-based Vet Centers provide bereavement counseling at no cost.
- Elkton Vet Center (410) 393 4485





# Maryland State Property Tax Exemption

- \* Based on Veteran's primary residence located in State of Maryland.
- \* Veterans who are 100 percent disabled for service-connected causes. The exemption passes to the veteran's spouse upon his or her death.
- \* Surviving spouse of active duty military personnel who died in the line of duty.



# Things to have together

- ❑ Veteran's discharge or DD214
- ❑ VA decisions
- ❑ Marriage license
- ❑ Death certificate
- ❑ Funeral bill

There are tools available, such as  
The Paper Safe



<http://www.avva.org/papersafe.html>



# How to Get a Military Discharge

- \* [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) (best option)
- \* Standard Form 181
  - \* Fax number: 314-801-9195
  - \* National Personnel Records Center
  - Military Personnel Records
  - 1 Archives Drive
  - St. Louis, MD 63138
- \* Urgent requests can be processed





# References

- \* US Department of Veterans Affairs Survivors Benefits  
[http://www.va.gov/opa/persona/dependent\\_survivor.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/persona/dependent_survivor.asp)
- \* CHAMPVA  
<http://www.va.gov/purchasedcare/programs/dependents/champva/>
- \* Camp Lejeune Family Member (CLFM) Program  
<https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov/> or (512) 460 5536
- \* National Cemetery Administration [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)
- \* Arlington National Cemetery [www.arlingtoncemetery.mil](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil) or (877) 907 8585
- \* Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery Program  
<http://veterans.maryland.gov/maryland-department-of-veterans-affairs-cemetery-program/>
- \* Burial at Sea Program <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/casualty/mortuary/Pages/default.aspx> or (866) 787-0081



# My Walk-in Service Schedule

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**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the Month**  
**3pm to 6pm**

VFW Post 5337  
3705 Pulaski Hwy  
Abingdon, MD 21009

**3rd Saturday of the Month**  
**3pm to 6pm**

VFW Post 8175  
208 W. High Street  
Elkton, MD 21921

**4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the Month**  
**3pm to 6pm**

American Legion Post 135  
300 Cherry Street  
Perryville, MD 21903

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