

through the General Counsel. Such recommendation may be initiated by the head of the administration having responsibility for the benefit, or of any concerned staff office, or by the Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals. When a recommendation for relief under paragraph (a) or (b) of this section is initiated by the head of a staff office, or the Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals, the views of the head of the administration having responsibility for the benefit will be obtained and transmitted with the recommendation of the initiating office.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 503, 512)

[37 FR 22864, Oct. 26, 1972, as amended at 49 FR 30693, Aug. 1, 1984; 54 FR 34981, Aug. 23, 1989; 68 FR 25504, May 13, 2003]

§ 2.8 Delegation of authority to authorize allowances for Department of Veterans Affairs employees who are notaries public.

(a) Employees occupying or acting in the positions designated in paragraph (b) of this section are authorized to designate those employees who are required to serve as notaries public in connection with the performance of official business and to pay an allowance for the costs therefor not to exceed the expense required to be incurred by them in order to obtain their commission.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5945)

(b) Designated positions: Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary for Benefits, Director, Office of Data Management and Telecommunications, Chief Medical Director, General Counsel, Directors of regional offices, hospitals, domiciliaries, and centers.

[35 FR 13771, Aug. 29, 1970, as amended at 49 FR 30693, Aug. 1, 1984]

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EDITORIAL NOTE: Nomenclature changes to part 3 appear at 61 FR 7216, Feb. 27, 1996; 62 FR 35970, July 3, 1997; 62 FR 47532, Sept. 9, 1997; and 67 FR 46868, July 17, 2002.

Subpart A—Pension, Compensation, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

AUTHORITY: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), unless otherwise noted.

GENERAL

§ 3.1 Definitions.

(a) *Armed Forces* means the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including their Reserve components.

(b) *Reserve component* means the Army, Naval, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserves and the National and Air National Guard of the United States.

(c) *Reserves* means members of a Reserve component of one of the Armed Forces.

(d) *Veteran* means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

(1) For compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation the term *veteran* includes a person who died in active service and whose death was not due to willful misconduct.

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(2) For death pension the term *veteran* includes a person who died in active service under conditions which preclude payment of service-connected death benefits, provided such person had completed at least 2 years honorable military, naval or air service, as certified by the Secretary concerned. (See §§ 3.3(b)(3)(i) and 3.3(b)(4)(i))

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(e) *Veteran of any war* means any veteran who served in the active military, naval or air service during a period of war as set forth in § 3.2.

(f) *Period of war* means the periods described in § 3.2.

(g) *Secretary concerned* means:

(1) The Secretary of the Army, with respect to matters concerning the Army;

(2) The Secretary of the Navy, with respect to matters concerning the Navy or the Marine Corps;

(3) The Secretary of the Air Force, with respect to matters concerning the Air Force;

(4) The Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to matters concerning the Coast Guard;

(5) The Secretary of Health and Human Services, with respect to matters concerning the Public Health Service; and

(6) The Secretary of Commerce, with respect to matters concerning the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Environmental Science Services Administration, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(h) *Discharge or release* includes retirement from the active military, naval, or air service.

(i) *State* means each of the several States, Territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(j) *Marriage* means a marriage valid under the law of the place where the parties resided at the time of marriage, or the law of the place where the parties resided when the right to benefits accrued.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(c))

(k) *Service-connected* means, with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated,

or that the death resulted from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

(l) *Nonservice-connected* means, with respect to disability or death, that such disability was not incurred or aggravated, or that the death did not result from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

(m) *In line of duty* means an injury or disease incurred or aggravated during a period of active military, naval, or air service unless such injury or disease was the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct or, for claims filed after October 31, 1990, was a result of his or her abuse of alcohol or drugs. A service department finding that injury, disease or death occurred in line of duty will be binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs unless it is patently inconsistent with the requirements of laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Requirements as to line of duty are not met if at the time the injury was suffered or disease contracted the veteran was:

(1) Avoiding duty by desertion, or was absent without leave which materially interfered with the performance of military duty.

(2) Confined under a sentence of court-martial involving an unremitted dishonorable discharge.

(3) Confined under sentence of a civil court for a felony as determined under the laws of the jurisdiction where the person was convicted by such court.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105)

NOTE: See § 3.1(y)(2)(iii) for applicability of *in line of duty* in determining former prisoner of war status.

(n) *Willful misconduct* means an act involving conscious wrongdoing or known prohibited action. A service department finding that injury, disease or death was not due to misconduct will be binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs unless it is patently inconsistent with the facts and the requirements of laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(1) It involves deliberate or intentional wrongdoing with knowledge of or wanton and reckless disregard of its probable consequences.

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(2) Mere technical violation of police regulations or ordinances will not per se constitute willful misconduct.

(3) Willful misconduct will not be determinative unless it is the proximate cause of injury, disease or death. (See §§ 3.301, 3.302.)

(o) *Political subdivision of the United States* includes the jurisdiction defined as a State in paragraph (i) of this section, and the counties, cities or municipalities of each.

(p) *Claim* means a written or electronic communication requesting a determination of entitlement or evidencing a belief in entitlement, to a specific benefit under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs submitted on an application form prescribed by the Secretary. (See scope of claim, § 3.155(d)(2); complete claim, § 3.160(a); issues within a claim, § 3.151(c)).

(1) *Initial claim*. An initial claim is any complete claim, other than a supplemental claim, for a benefit on a form prescribed by the Secretary. The first initial claim for one or more benefits received by VA is further defined as an original claim. (See original claim, § 3.160(b)). Initial claims include:

(i) A new claim requesting service connection for a disability or grant of a new benefit, and

(ii) A claim for increase in a disability evaluation rating or rate of a benefit paid based on a change or worsening in condition or circumstance since the last decision issued by VA for the benefit.

(2) *Supplemental claim*. A supplemental claim is any complete claim for a VA benefit on an application form prescribed by the Secretary where an initial or supplemental claim for the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided. (See supplemental claim; § 3.2501.)

(q) *Notice* means written notice sent to a claimant or payee at his or her latest address of record.

(r) *Date of receipt* means the date on which a claim, information or evidence was received in the Department of Veterans Affairs, except as to specific provisions for claims or evidence received in the State Department (§ 3.108), or in the Social Security Administration (§§ 3.153, 3.201), or Department of De-

fense as to initial claims filed at or prior to separation. However, the Under Secretary for Benefits may establish, by notice published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, exceptions to this rule, using factors such as postmark or the date the claimant signed the correspondence, when he or she determines that a natural or man-made interference with the normal channels through which the Veterans Benefits Administration ordinarily receives correspondence has resulted in one or more Veterans Benefits Administration offices experiencing extended delays in receipt of claims, information, or evidence from claimants served by the affected office or offices to an extent that, if not addressed, would adversely affect such claimants through no fault of their own.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 512(a), 5110)

(s) *On the borders thereof* means, with regard to service during the Mexican border period, the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, and the nations of Guatemala and British Honduras.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(30))

(t) *In the waters adjacent thereto* means, with regard to service during the Mexican border period, the waters (including the islands therein) which are within 750 nautical miles (863 statute miles) of the coast of the mainland of Mexico.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(30))

(u) *Section 306 pension* means those disability and death pension programs in effect on December 31, 1978, which arose out of Pub. L. 86-211; 73 Stat. 432.

(v) *Old-Law pension* means the disability and death pension programs that were in effect on June 30, 1960. Also known as protected pension, *i.e.*, protected under section 9(b) of the Veteran's Pension Act of 1959 (Pub. L. 86-211; 73 Stat. 432).

(w) *Improved pension* means the disability and death pension programs becoming effective January 1, 1979, under authority of Pub. L. 95-588; 92 Stat. 2497.

(x) *Service pension* is the name given to Spanish-American War pension. It is

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referred to as a service pension because entitlement is based solely on service without regard to nonservice-connected disability, income and net worth.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1512, 1536)

(y) *Former prisoner of war.* The term *former prisoner of war* means a person who, while serving in the active military, naval or air service, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy or foreign government, the agents of either, or a hostile force.

(1) *Decisions based on service department findings.* The Department of Veterans Affairs shall accept the findings of the appropriate service department that a person was a prisoner of war during a period of war unless a reasonable basis exists for questioning it. Such findings shall be accepted only when detention or internment is by an enemy government or its agents.

(2) *Other decisions.* In all other situations, including those in which the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot accept the service department findings, the following factors shall be used to determine prisoner of war status:

(i) *Circumstances of detention or internment.* To be considered a former prisoner of war, a serviceperson must have been forcibly detained or interned under circumstances comparable to those under which persons generally have been forcibly detained or interned by enemy governments during periods of war. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, physical hardships or abuse, psychological hardships or abuse, malnutrition, and unsanitary conditions. Each individual member of a particular group of detainees or internees shall, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be considered to have experienced the same circumstances as those experienced by the group.

(ii) *Reason for detainment or internment.* The reason for which a serviceperson was detained or interned is immaterial in determining POW status, except that a serviceperson who is detained or interned by a foreign government for an alleged violation of its laws is not entitled to be considered a former POW on the basis of that period of detention or internment, unless the

charges are a sham intended to legitimize the period of detention or internment.

(3) *Central Office approval.* The Director of the Compensation Service, VA Central Office, shall approve all VA regional office determinations establishing or denying POW status, with the exception of those service department determinations accepted under paragraph (y)(1) of this section.

(4) *In line of duty.* The Department of Veterans Affairs shall consider that a serviceperson was forcibly detained or interned in line of duty unless the evidence of record discloses that forcible detainment or internment was the proximate result of the serviceperson's own willful misconduct.

(5) *Hostile force.* The term *hostile force* means any entity other than an enemy or foreign government or the agents of either whose actions are taken to further or enhance anti-American military, political or economic objectives or views, or to attempt to embarrass the United States.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(32))

(z) *Nursing home* means

(1) Any extended care facility which is licensed by a State to provide skilled or intermediate-level nursing care,

(2) A nursing home care unit in a State veterans' home which is approved for payment under 38 U.S.C. 1742, or

(3) A Department of Veterans Affairs Nursing Home Care Unit.

(aa) *Fraud:*

(1) As used in 38 U.S.C. 103 and implementing regulations, fraud means an intentional misrepresentation of fact, or the intentional failure to disclose pertinent facts, for the purpose of obtaining, or assisting an individual to obtain an annulment or divorce, with knowledge that the misrepresentation or failure to disclose may result in the erroneous granting of an annulment or divorce; and

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) As used in 38 U.S.C. 110 and 1159 and implementing regulations, fraud means an intentional misrepresentation of fact, or the intentional failure

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to disclose pertinent facts, for the purpose of obtaining or retaining, or assisting an individual to obtain or retain, eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, with knowledge that the misrepresentation or failure to disclose may result in the erroneous award or retention of such benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Pension. See § 3.3. Compensation. See § 3.4. Dependency and indemnity compensation. See § 3.5. Preservation of disability ratings. See § 3.951. Service-connection. See § 3.957.

[26 FR 1563, Feb. 24, 1961]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.1, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.2 Periods of war.

This section sets forth the beginning and ending dates of each war period beginning with the Indian wars. Note that the term *period of war* in reference to pension entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 and 1542 means all of the war periods listed in this section except the Indian wars and the Spanish-American War. See § 3.3(a)(3) and (b)(4)(i).

(a) *Indian wars*. January 1, 1817, through December 31, 1898, inclusive. Service must have been rendered with the United States military forces against Indian tribes or nations.

(b) *Spanish-American War*. April 21, 1898, through July 4, 1902, inclusive. If the veteran served with the United States military forces engaged in hostilities in the Moro Province, the ending date is July 15, 1903. The Philippine Insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion are included.

(c) *World War I*. April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918, inclusive. If the veteran served with the United States military forces in Russia, the ending date is April 1, 1920. Service after November 11, 1918 and before July 2, 1921 is considered World War I service if the veteran served in the active military, naval, or air service after April 5, 1917 and before November 12, 1918.

(d) *World War II*. December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946, inclusive. If the veteran was in service on December 31, 1946, continuous service before July

26, 1947, is considered World War II service.

(e) *Korean conflict*. June 27, 1950, through January 31, 1955, inclusive.

(f) *Vietnam era*. The period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, inclusive, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. The period beginning on August 5, 1964, and ending on May 7, 1975, inclusive, in all other cases.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(29))

(g) *Future dates*. The period beginning on the date of any future declaration of war by the Congress and ending on a date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or concurrent resolution of the Congress.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101)

(h) *Mexican border period*. May 9, 1916, through April 5, 1917, in the case of a veteran who during such period served in Mexico, on the borders thereof, or in the waters adjacent thereto.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(30))

(i) *Persian Gulf War*. August 2, 1990, through date to be prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(33))

[26 FR 1563, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 32 FR 13223, Sept. 19, 1967; 36 FR 8445, May 6, 1971; 37 FR 6676, Apr. 1, 1972; 40 FR 27030, June 26, 1975; 44 FR 45931, Aug. 6, 1979; 56 FR 57986, Nov. 15, 1991; 62 FR 35422, July 1, 1997]

§ 3.3 Pension.

(a) *Pension for veterans*—(1) *Service pension; Spanish-American War*. A benefit payable monthly by the Department of Veterans Affairs because of service in the Spanish-American War. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran:

(i) Had 70 (or 90) days or more active service during the Spanish-American War; or

(ii) Was discharged or released from such service for a disability adjudged service connected without benefit of presumptive provisions of law, or at the time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical

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judgment would have justified a discharge for disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1512)

(2) *Section 306 pension.* A benefit payable monthly by the Department of Veterans Affairs because of nonservice-connected disability or age. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran:

(i) Served 90 days or more in either the Mexican border period, World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam era, or served an aggregate of 90 days or more in separate periods of service during the same or during different war periods, including service during the Spanish-American War (Pub. L. 87-101, 75 Stat. 218; Pub. L. 90-77, 81 Stat. 178; Pub. L. 92-198, 85 Stat. 663); or

(ii) Served continuously for a period of 90 consecutive days or more and such period ended during the Mexican border period or World War I, or began or ended during World War II, the Korean conflict or the Vietnam era (Pub. L. 87-101, 75 Stat. 218; Pub. L. 88-664, 78 Stat. 1094; Pub. L. 90-77, 81 Stat. 178; Pub. L. 91-588, 84 Stat. 1580; Pub. L. 92-198, 85 Stat. 663; Pub. L. 94-169, 89 Stat. 1013; Pub. L. 95-204, 91 Stat. 1455); or

(iii) Was discharged or released from such wartime service, before having served 90 days, for a disability adjudged service connected without the benefit of presumptive provisions of law, or at the time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability; and

(iv) Is permanently and totally disabled (a) from nonservice-connected disability not due to the veteran's own willful misconduct or vicious habits, or (b) by reason of having attained the age of 65 years or by reason of having become unemployable after age 65; and

(v)(a) Is in receipt of section 306 pension or (b) has an application for pension pending on December 31, 1978, or (c) meets the age or disability requirements for such pension on December 31, 1978, and files a claim within 1 year of that date and also within 1 year after meeting the age or disability requirements.

(vi) Meets the income and net worth requirements of 38 U.S.C. 1521 and 1522

as in effect on December 31, 1978, and all other provisions of title 38, United States Code, in effect on December 31, 1978, applicable to section 306 pension.

NOTE: The pension provisions of title 38 U.S.C., as in effect on December 31, 1978, are available in any VA regional office.

(3) *Improved pension; Pub. L. 95-588 (92 Stat. 2497).* A benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans of a period or periods of war because of nonservice-connected disability or age. The qualifying periods of war for this benefit are the Mexican border period, World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era and the Persian Gulf War. Payments are made monthly unless the amount of the annual benefit is less than 4 percent of the maximum annual rate payable to a veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b), in which case payments may be made less frequently than monthly. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran:

(i) Served in the active military, naval or air service for 90 days or more during a period of war (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); or

(ii) Served in the active military, naval or air service during a period of war and was discharged or released from such service for a disability adjudged service-connected without presumptive provisions of law, or at time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); or

(iii) Served in the active military, naval or air service for a period of 90 consecutive days or more and such period began or ended during a period of war (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); or

(iv) Served in the active military, naval or air service for an aggregate of 90 days or more in two or more separate periods of service during more than one period of war (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); and

(v) Meets the net worth requirements under §3.274 and does not have an annual income in excess of the applicable maximum annual pension rate specified in §3.23; and

(vi)(A) Is age 65 or older; or

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(B) Is permanently and totally disabled from nonservice-connected disability not due to the veteran's own willful misconduct. For purposes of this paragraph, a veteran is considered permanently and totally disabled if the veteran is any of the following:

(1) A patient in a nursing home for long-term care because of disability; or

(2) Disabled, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security for purposes of any benefits administered by the Commissioner; or

(3) Unemployable as a result of disability reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the person; or

(4) Suffering from:

(i) Any disability which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation, but only if it is reasonably certain that such disability will continue throughout the life of the person; or

(ii) Any disease or disorder determined by VA to be of such a nature or extent as to justify a determination that persons suffering from that disease or disorder are permanently and totally disabled.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a), 1513, 1521, 1522)

(b) *Pension for survivors*—(1) *Indian war death pension*. A monthly benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the surviving spouse or child of a deceased veteran of an Indian war. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran had qualifying service as specified in 38 U.S.C. 1511. Indian war death pension rates are set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1534 and 1535.

(2) *Spanish-American War death pension*. A monthly benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the surviving spouse or child of a deceased veteran of the Spanish-American War, if the veteran:

(i) Had 90 days or more active service during the Spanish-American War; or

(ii) Was discharged or released from such service for a disability service-connected without benefit of presumptive provisions of law, or at time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, as shown by official service records, which in medical judgment

would have justified a discharge for disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1536, 1537)

(3) *Section 306 death pension*. A monthly benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a surviving spouse or child because of a veteran's nonservice-connected death. Basic entitlement exists if:

(i) The veteran (as defined in §3.1(d) and (d)(2)) had qualifying service as specified in paragraph (a)(2)(i), (ii), or (iii) of this section; or

(ii) The veteran was, at time of death, receiving or entitled to receive compensation or retired pay for service-connected disability based on wartime service; and

(iii) The surviving spouse or child (A) was in receipt of section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, or (B) had a claim for pension pending on that date, or (C) filed a claim for pension after that date but within 1 year after the veteran's death, if the veteran died before January 1, 1979; and

(iv) The surviving spouse or child meets the income and net worth requirements of 38 U.S.C. 1541, 1542 or 1543 as in effect on December 31, 1978, and all other provisions of title 38, United States Code in effect on December 31, 1978, applicable to section 306 pension.

NOTE: The pension provisions of title 38, United States Code, as in effect on December 31, 1978, are available in any VA regional office.)

(4) *Improved death pension, Public Law 95-538*. A benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a veteran's surviving spouse or child because of the veteran's nonservice-connected death. Payments are made monthly unless the amount of the annual benefit is less than 4 percent of the maximum annual rate payable to a veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b), in which case payments may be made less frequently than monthly. Basic entitlement exists if:

(i) The veteran (as defined in §3.1(d) and (d)(2)) had qualifying service as specified in paragraph (a)(3)(i), (ii), (iii), or (iv) of this section (38 U.S.C. 1541(a)); or

(ii) The veteran was, at time of death, receiving or entitled to receive

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compensation or retired pay for a service-connected disability based on service during a period of war. (The qualifying periods of war are specified in paragraph (a)(3) of this section.) (38 U.S.C. 1541(a)); and

(iii) The surviving spouse or child meets the net worth requirements of § 3.274 and has an annual income not in excess of the applicable maximum annual pension rate specified in §§ 3.23 and 3.24.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 1542)

CROSS REFERENCES: Section 306 pension. See § 3.1(u). Improved pension. See § 3.1(w). Improved pension rates. See § 3.23. Improved pension rates; surviving children. See § 3.24. Frequency of payment of improved pension. See § 3.30. Relationship of net worth to pension entitlement. See § 3.274.

[44 FR 45931, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 56 FR 19579, Apr. 29, 1991; 56 FR 22910, May 17, 1991; 56 FR 25044, June 3, 1991; 56 FR 57986, Nov. 15, 1991; 68 FR 34541, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.4 Compensation.

(a) *Compensation.* This term means a monthly payment made by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a veteran because of service-connected disability, or to a surviving spouse, child, or parent of a veteran because of the service-connected death of the veteran occurring before January 1, 1957, or under the circumstances outlined in paragraph (c)(2) of this section. If the veteran was discharged or released from service, the discharge or release must have been under conditions other than dishonorable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(2), (13))

(b) *Disability compensation.* (1) Basic entitlement for a veteran exists if the veteran is disabled as the result of a personal injury or disease (including aggravation of a condition existing prior to service) while in active service if the injury or the disease was incurred or aggravated in line of duty.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1110, 1131)

(2) An additional amount of compensation may be payable for a spouse, child, and/or dependent parent where a veteran is entitled to compensation

based on disability evaluated as 30 per centum or more disabling.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1115)

(c) *Death compensation.* Basic entitlement exists for a surviving spouse, child or children, and dependent parent or parents if:

(1) The veteran died before January 1, 1957; or

(2) The veteran died on or after May 1, 1957, and before January 1, 1972, if at the time of death a policy of United States Government Life Insurance or National Service Life Insurance was in effect under waiver of premiums under 38 U.S.C. 1924 unless the waiver was granted under the first proviso of section 622(a) of the National Service Life Insurance Act of 1940, and the veteran died before return to military jurisdiction or within 120 days thereafter. (See § 3.5(d) as to Public Health Service.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1121, 1141)

[26 FR 1564, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 38 FR 21923, Aug. 14, 1973; 39 FR 34529, Sept. 26, 1974; 44 FR 22717, Apr. 17, 1979]

§ 3.5 Dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) *Dependency and indemnity compensation.* This term means a monthly payment made by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a surviving spouse, child, or parent:

(1) Because of a service-connected death occurring after December 31, 1956, or

(2) Pursuant to the election of a surviving spouse, child, or parent, in the case of such a death occurring before January 1, 1957.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101 (14))

(b) *Entitlement.* Basic entitlement for a surviving spouse, child or children, and parent or parents of a veteran exists, if:

(1) Death occurred on or after January 1, 1957, except in the situation specified in § 3.4(c)(2); or

(2) Death occurred prior to January 1, 1957, and the claimant was receiving or eligible to receive death compensation on December 31, 1956 (or, as to a parent, would have been eligible except for income), under laws in effect on that date or who subsequently becomes

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eligible by reason of a death which occurred prior to January 1, 1957; or

(3) Death occurred on or after May 1, 1957, and before January 1, 1972, and the claimant had been ineligible to receive dependency and indemnity compensation because of the exception in subparagraph (1) of this paragraph. In such case dependency and indemnity compensation is payable upon election.

(38 U.S.C. 1310, 1316, 1317, Public Law 92-197, 85 Stat. 660)

(c) *Exclusiveness of remedy.* No person eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation by reason of a death occurring on or after January 1, 1957, shall be eligible by reason of such death for death pension or compensation under any other law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, except that, effective November 2, 1994, a surviving spouse who is receiving dependency and indemnity compensation may elect to receive death pension instead of such compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1317)

(d) *Group life insurance.* No dependency and indemnity compensation or death compensation shall be paid to any surviving spouse, child or parent based on the death of a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Environmental Science Services Administration, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration occurring on or after May 1, 1957, if any amounts are payable under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Act of 1954 (Pub. L. 598, 83d Cong., as amended) based on the same death.

(Authority: Sec. 501(c)(2), Pub. L. 881, 84th Cong. (70 Stat. 857), as amended by Sec. 13(u), Pub. L. 85-857; (72 Stat. 1266); Sec. 5, Pub. L. 91-621 (84 Stat. 1863))

[29 FR 10396, July 25, 1964, as amended at 35 FR 18661, Dec. 9, 1970; 37 FR 6676, Apr. 1, 1972; 39 FR 34529, Sept. 26, 1974; 44 FR 22717, Apr. 17, 1979; 58 FR 25561, Apr. 27, 1993; 58 FR 27622, May 10, 1993; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995; 70 FR 72220, Dec. 2, 2005; 73 FR 23356, Apr. 30, 2008]

§ 3.6 Duty periods.

(a) *Active military, naval, and air service.* This includes active duty, any period of active duty for training during

which the individual concerned was disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty, and any period of inactive duty training during which the individual concerned was disabled or died from an injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or from an acute myocardial infarction, a cardiac arrest, or a cerebrovascular accident which occurred during such training.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(24))

(b) *Active duty.* This means:

(1) Full-time duty in the Armed Forces, other than active duty for training;

(2) Full-time duty (other than for training purposes) as a commissioned officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service:

(i) On or after July 29, 1945, or

(ii) Before that date under circumstances affording entitlement to *full military benefits*, or

(iii) At any time, for the purposes of dependency and indemnity compensation.

(3) Full-time duty as a commissioned officer of the Coast and Geodetic Survey or of its successor agencies, the Environmental Science Services Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

(i) On or after July 29, 1945, or

(ii) Before that date:

(a) While on transfer to one of the Armed Forces, or

(b) While, in time of war or national emergency declared by the President, assigned to duty on a project for one of the Armed Forces in an area determined by the Secretary of Defense to be of immediate military hazard, or

(c) In the Philippine Islands on December 7, 1941, and continuously in such islands thereafter, or

(iii) At any time, for the purposes of dependency and indemnity compensation.

(4) Service at any time as a cadet at the United States Military, Air Force, or Coast Guard Academy, or as a midshipman at the United States Naval Academy;

(5) Attendance at the preparatory schools of the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Military Academy, or the United States Naval

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Academy for enlisted active-duty members who are reassigned to a preparatory school without a release from active duty, and for other individuals who have a commitment to active duty in the Armed Forces that would be binding upon disenrollment from the preparatory school;

(6) Authorized travel to or from such duty or service; and

(7) A person discharged or released from a period of active duty, shall be deemed to have continued on active duty during the period of time immediately following the date of such discharge or release from such duty determined by the Secretary concerned to have been required for him or her to proceed to his or her home by the most direct route, and, in all instances, until midnight of the date of such discharge or release.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 106(c))

(c) *Active duty for training.* (1) Full-time duty in the Armed Forces performed by Reserves for training purposes;

(2) Full-time duty for training purposes performed as a commissioned officer of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service:

(i) On or after July 29, 1945, or

(ii) Before that date under circumstances affording entitlement to *full military benefits*, or

(iii) At any time, for the purposes of dependency and indemnity compensation:

(3) Full-time duty performed by members of the National Guard of any State, under 32 U.S.C. 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505, or the prior corresponding provisions of law or full-time duty by such members while participating in the reenactment of the Battle of First Manassas in July 1961;

(4) Duty performed by a member of a Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program when ordered to such duty for the purpose of training or a practice cruise under chapter 103 of title 10 U.S.C.

(i) The requirements of this paragraph are effective—

(A) On or after October 1, 1982, with respect to deaths and disabilities resulting from diseases or injuries in-

curred or aggravated after September 30, 1982, and

(B) October 1, 1983, with respect to deaths and disabilities resulting from diseases or injuries incurred or aggravated before October 1, 1982.

(ii) Effective on or after October 1, 1988, such duty must be prerequisite to the member being commissioned and must be for a period of at least four continuous weeks.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(22)(D) as amended by Pub. L. 100-456)

(5) Attendance at the preparatory schools of the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Military Academy, or the United States Naval Academy by an individual who enters the preparatory school directly from the Reserves, National Guard or civilian life, unless the individual has a commitment to service on active duty which would be binding upon disenrollment from the preparatory school.

(6) Authorized travel to or from such duty.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(22))

The term does not include duty performed as a temporary member of the Coast Guard Reserve.

(d) *Inactive duty training.* This means: (1) Duty (other than full-time duty) prescribed for Reserves (including commissioned officers of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service) by the Secretary concerned under 37 U.S.C. 206 or any other provision of law;

(2) Special additional duties authorized for Reserves (including commissioned officers of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service) by an authority designated by the Secretary concerned and performed by them on a voluntary basis in connection with the prescribed training or maintenance activities of the units to which they are assigned; and

(3) Training (other than active duty for training) by a member of, or applicant for membership (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 8140(g)) in, the Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps prescribed under chapter 103 of title 10 U.S.C.

(4) Duty (other than full-time duty) performed by a member of the National

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Guard of any State, under 32 U.S.C. 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505, or the prior corresponding provisions of law. The term *inactive duty training* does not include:

- (i) Work or study performed in connection with correspondence courses,
- (ii) Attendance at an educational institution in an inactive status, or
- (iii) Duty performed as a temporary member of the Coast Guard Reserve.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(23))

(e) *Travel status—training duty (disability or death from injury or covered disease)*. Any individual:

- (1) Who, when authorized or required by competent authority, assumes an obligation to perform active duty for training or inactive duty training; and
- (2) Who is disabled or dies from an injury or covered disease incurred while proceeding directly to or returning directly from such active duty for training or inactive duty training shall be deemed to have been on active duty for training or inactive duty training, as the case may be. The Department of Veterans Affairs will determine whether such individual was so authorized or required to perform such duty, and whether the individual was disabled or died from an injury or covered disease so incurred. In making such determinations, there shall be taken into consideration the hour on which the individual began to proceed or return; the hour on which the individual was scheduled to arrive for, or on which the individual ceased to perform, such duty; the method of travel performed; the itinerary; the manner in which the travel was performed; and the immediate cause of disability or death. Whenever any claim is filed alleging that the claimant is entitled to benefits by reason of this paragraph, the burden of proof shall be on the claimant.

(3) For purposes of this section, the term *covered disease* means any of the following:

- (i) An acute myocardial infarction.
- (ii) A cardiac arrest.

- (iii) A cerebrovascular accident.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 106(d))

[26 FR 1564, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 26 FR 6767, July 28, 1961; 27 FR 4023, Apr. 27, 1962; 29 FR 14171, Oct. 15, 1964; 36 FR 5341, Mar. 20, 1971; 41 FR 26881, June 29, 1976; 49 FR 47003, Nov. 30, 1984; 54 FR 51200, Dec. 13, 1989; 55 FR 23931, June 13, 1990; 60 FR 57179, Nov. 14, 1995; 61 FR 11731, Mar. 22, 1996; 66 FR 48560, Sept. 21, 2001; 67 FR 49585, July 31, 2002]

§ 3.7 Individuals and groups considered to have performed active military, naval, or air service.

The following individuals and groups are considered to have performed active military, naval, or air service:

(a) *Aerial transportation of mail* (*Pub. L. 140, 73d Congress*). Persons who were injured or died while serving under conditions set forth in *Pub. L. 140, 73d Congress*.

(b) *Aliens*. Effective July 28, 1959, a veteran discharged for alienage during a period of hostilities unless evidence affirmatively shows he or she was discharged at his or her own request. A veteran who was discharged for alienage after a period of hostilities and whose service was honest and faithful is not barred from benefits if he or she is otherwise entitled. A discharge changed prior to January 7, 1957, to honorable by a board established under authority of section 301, *Pub. L. 346, 78th Congress*, as amended, or section 207, *Pub. L. 601, 79th Congress*, as amended (now 10 U.S.C. 1552 and 1553), will be considered as evidence that the discharge was not at the alien's request. (See § 3.12.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5303(c))

(c) *Army field clerks*. Included as enlisted men.

(d) *Army Nurse Corps, Navy Nurse Corps, and female dietetic and physical therapy personnel*. (1) Army and Navy nurses (female) on active service under order of the service department.

(2) Dietetic and physical therapy (female) personnel, excluding students and apprentices, appointed with relative rank on or after December 22, 1942, or commissioned on or after June 22, 1944.

(e) *Aviation camps*. Students who were enlisted men during World War I.

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(f) *Cadets and midshipmen.* See § 3.6(b)(4).

(g) *Coast and Geodetic Survey, and its successor agencies, the Environmental Science Services Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.* See § 3.6(b)(3).

(h) *Coast Guard.* Active service in Coast Guard on or after January 29, 1915, while under jurisdiction of the Treasury Department, Navy Department, or the Department of Transportation. (See § 3.6 (c) and (d) as to temporary members of the Coast Guard Reserves.)

(i) *Contract surgeons.* For compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation, if the disability or death was the result of disease or injury contracted in line of duty during a war period while actually performing the duties of assistant surgeon or acting assistant surgeon with any military force in the field, or in transit or in hospital.

(j) *Field clerks, Quartermaster Corps.* Included as enlisted men.

(k) *Lighthouse service personnel.* Transferred to the service and jurisdiction of War or Navy Departments by Executive order under the Act of August 29, 1916. Effective July 1, 1939, service was consolidated with the Coast Guard.

(l) *Male nurses.* Persons who were enlisted men of Medical Corps.

(m) *National Guard.* Members of the National Guard of the United States and Air National Guard of the United States are included as Reserves. See § 3.6 (c) and (d) as to training duty performed by members of a State National Guard and paragraph (o) of this section as to disability suffered after being called into Federal service and before enrollment.

(n) *Persons heretofore having a pensionable or compensable status.*

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1152, 1504)

(o) *Persons ordered to service.* (1) Any person who has:

(i) Applied for enlistment or enrollment in the active military, naval, or air service and who is provisionally accepted and directed, or ordered, to report to a place for final acceptance into the service, or

(ii) Been selected or drafted for such service, and has reported according to

a call from the person's local draft board and before final rejection, or

(iii) Been called into Federal service as a member of the National Guard, but has not been enrolled for Federal service, and

(iv) Suffered injury or disease in line of duty while going to, or coming from, or at such place for final acceptance or entry upon active duty,

is considered to have been on active duty and therefore to have incurred such disability in active service.

(2) The injury or disease must be due to some factor relating to compliance with proper orders. Draftees and selectees are included when reporting for preinduction examination or for final induction on active duty. Such persons are not included for injury or disease suffered during the period of inactive duty, or period of waiting, after a final physical examination and prior to beginning the trip to report for induction. Members of the National Guard are included when reporting to a designated rendezvous.

(p) *Philippine Scouts and others.* See § 3.40.

(q) *Public Health Service.* See § 3.6 (a) and (b).

(r) *Reserves.* See § 3.6 (a), (b), and (c).

(s) *Revenue Cutter Service.* While serving under direction of Secretary of the Navy in cooperation with the Navy.

(t) *Training camps.* Members of training camps authorized by section 54 of the National Defense Act, except members of Student Army Training Corps Camps at the Presidio of San Francisco, Plattsburg, New York, Fort Sheridan, Illinois, Howard University, Washington, D.C., Camp Perry, Ohio, and Camp Hancock, Georgia, from July 18, 1918, to September 16, 1918.

(u) *Women's Army Corps (WAC).* Service on or after July 1, 1943.

(v) *Women's Reserve of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.* Same benefits as members of the Officers Reserve Corps or enlisted men of the United States Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard.

(w) *Russian Railway Service Corps.* Service during World War I as certified by the Secretary of the Army.

(x) *Active military service certified as such under section 401 of Pub. L. 95-202.*

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Such service if certified by the Secretary of Defense as active military service and if a discharge under honorable conditions is issued by the Secretary. The effective dates for an award based upon such service shall be as provided by § 3.400(z) and 38 U.S.C. 5110, except that in no event shall such an award be made effective earlier than November 23, 1977. Service in the following groups has been certified as active military service.

(1) Women's Air Forces Service Pilots (WASP).

(2) Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit of World War I.

(3) Engineer Field Clerks (WWI).

(4) Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).

(5) Quartermaster Corps Female Clerical Employees serving with the AEF (American Expeditionary Forces) in World War I.

(6) Civilian Employees of Pacific Naval Air Bases Who Actively Participated in Defense of Wake Island During World War II.

(7) Reconstruction Aides and Dietitians in World War I.

(8) Male Civilian Ferry Pilots.

(9) Wake Island Defenders from Guam.

(10) Civilian Personnel Assigned to the Secret Intelligence Element of the OSS.

(11) Guam Combat Patrol.

(12) Quartermaster Corps *Keswick* Crew on Corregidor (WWII).

(13) U.S. Civilian Volunteers Who Actively Participated in the Defense of Bataan.

(14) United States Merchant Seamen Who Served on Blockships in Support of Operation Mulberry.

(15) American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service during the Period of Armed Conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945.

(16) Civilian Navy IFF Technicians Who Served in the Combat Areas of the Pacific during World War II (December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945). As used in the official name of this group, the acronym *IFF* stands for Identification Friend or Foe.

(17) U.S. Civilians of the American Field Service (AFS) Who Served Overseas Operationally in World War I dur-

ing the Period August 31, 1917 to January 1, 1918.

(18) U.S. Civilians of the American Field Service (AFS) Who Served Overseas Under U.S. Armies and U.S. Army Groups in World War II during the Period December 7, 1941 through May 8, 1945.

(19) U.S. Civilian Employees of American Airlines Who Served Overseas as a Result of American Airlines' Contract with the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945.

(20) Civilian Crewmen of United States Coast and Geodetic Survey (USCGS) Vessels Who Performed Their Service in Areas of Immediate Military Hazard While Conducting Cooperative Operations with and for the United States Armed Forces Within a Time Frame of December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945 on a qualifying USCGS vessel. Qualifying USCGS vessels are the *Derickson*, *Explorer*, *Gilbert*, *Hilgard*, *E. Lester Jones*, *Lydonia*, *Patton*, *Surveyor*, *Wainwright*, *Westdahl*, *Oceanographer*, *Hydrographer*, and *Pathfinder*.

(21) Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) Who Served During the Period December 7, 1941 to July 18, 1942.

(22) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of United Air Lines (UAL), Who Served Overseas as a Result of UAL's Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945.

(23) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Transcontinental and Western Air (TWA), Inc., Who Served Overseas as a Result of TWA's Contract with the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945. The "Flight Crew" includes pursers.

(24) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Consolidated Vultree Aircraft Corporation (Consairway Division) Who Served Overseas as a Result of a Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945.

(25) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Pan American World Airways and Its

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Subsidiaries and Affiliates, Who Served Overseas as a Result of Pan American's Contract With the Air Transport Command and Naval Air Transport Service During the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945.

(26) Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Guard, Eritrea Service Command During the Period June 21, 1942 to March 31, 1943.

(27) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Northwest Airlines, Who Served Overseas as a Result of Northwest Airline's Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945.

(28) U.S. Civilian Female Employees of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps While Serving in the Defense of Bataan and Corregidor During the Period January 2, 1942 to February 3, 1945.

(29) U.S. Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Northeast Airlines Atlantic Division, Who Served Overseas as a Result of Northeast Airlines' Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 7, 1941, Through August 14, 1945.

(30) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Braniff Airways, Who Served Overseas in the North Atlantic or Under the Jurisdiction of the North Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command (ATC), as a Result of a Contract With the ATC During the Period February 26, 1942, Through August 14, 1945.

(31) The approximately 50 Chamorro and Carolinian former native policemen who received military training in the Donnal area of central Saipan and were placed under the command of Lt. Casino of the 6th Provisional Military Police Battalion to accompany United States Marines on active, combat-patrol activity from August 19, 1945, to September 2, 1945.

(32) Three scouts/guides, Miguel Tenorio, Penedicto Taisacan, and Cristino Dela Cruz, who assisted the United States Marines in the offensive operations against the Japanese on the Northern Mariana Islands from June 19, 1944, through September 2, 1945.

(33) The Operational Analysis Group of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, Office of Emergency

Management, which served overseas with the U.S. Army Air Corps from December 7, 1941, through August 15, 1945.

(Authority: Sec. 401, Pub. L. 95-202, 91 Stat. 1449)

(y) *Alaska Territorial Guard*: Members of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II who were honorably discharged from such service as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 106(f))

CROSS REFERENCE: Office of Workers' Compensation Programs. See §3.708.

[26 FR 1565, Feb. 24, 1961]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting §3.7, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§3.10 Dependency and indemnity compensation rate for a surviving spouse.

(a) *General determination of rate*. When VA grants a surviving spouse entitlement to DIC, VA will determine the rate of the benefit it will award. The rate of the benefit will be the total of the basic monthly rate specified in paragraph (b) or (d) of this section and any applicable increases specified in paragraph (c) or (e) of this section.

(b) *Basic monthly rate*. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the basic monthly rate of DIC for a surviving spouse will be the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1).

(c) *Section 1311(a)(2) increase*. The basic monthly rate under paragraph (b) of this section shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1311(a)(2) if the veteran, at the time of death, was receiving, or was entitled to receive, compensation for service-connected disability that was rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. Determinations of entitlement to this increase shall be made in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(d) *Alternative basic monthly rate for death occurring prior to January 1, 1993*. The basic monthly rate of DIC for a surviving spouse when the death of the veteran occurred prior to January 1, 1993, will be the amount specified in 38

U.S.C. 1311(a)(3) corresponding to the veteran's pay grade in service, but only if such rate is greater than the total of the basic monthly rate and the section 1311(a)(2) increase (if applicable) the surviving spouse is entitled to receive under paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section. The Secretary of the concerned service department will certify the veteran's pay grade and the certification will be binding on VA. DIC paid pursuant to this paragraph may not be increased by the section 1311(a)(2) increase under paragraph (c) of this section.

(e) *Additional increases.* One or more of the following increases may be paid in addition to the basic monthly rate and the section 1311(a)(2) increase.

(1) *Increase for children.* If the surviving spouse has one or more children under the age of 18 of the deceased veteran (including a child not in the surviving spouse's actual or constructive custody, or a child who is in active military service), the monthly DIC rate will be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(b) for each child.

(2) *Increase for regular aid and attendance.* If the surviving spouse is determined to be in need of regular aid and attendance under the criteria in § 3.352 or is a patient in a nursing home, the monthly DIC rate will be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(c).

(3) *Increase for housebound status.* If the surviving spouse does not qualify for the regular aid and attendance allowance but is housebound under the criteria in § 3.351(e), the monthly DIC rate will be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(d).

(4) For a two-year period beginning on the date entitlement to dependency and indemnity compensation commenced, the dependency and indemnity compensation paid monthly to a surviving spouse with one or more children below the age of 18 shall be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(f), regardless of the number of such children. The dependency and indemnity compensation payable under this paragraph is in addition to any other dependency and indemnity compensation payable. The increase in dependency and indemnity compensation of a surviving spouse under this para-

graph shall cease beginning with the first month commencing after the month in which all children of the surviving spouse have attained the age of 18.

(f) *Criteria governing section 1311(a)(2) increase.* In determining whether a surviving spouse qualifies for the section 1311(a)(2) increase under paragraph (c) of this section, the following standards shall apply.

(1) *Marriage requirement.* The surviving spouse must have been married to the veteran for the entire eight-year period referenced in paragraph (c) of this section in order to qualify for the section 1311(a)(2) increase.

(2) *Determination of total disability.* As used in paragraph (c) of this section, the phrase "rated by VA as totally disabling" includes total disability ratings based on unemployability (§ 4.16 of this chapter).

(3) *Definition of "entitled to receive".* As used in paragraph (c) of this section, the phrase "entitled to receive" means that the veteran filed a claim for disability compensation during his or her lifetime and one of the following circumstances is satisfied:

(i) The veteran would have received total disability compensation for the period specified in paragraph (c) of this section but for clear and unmistakable error committed by VA in a decision on a claim filed during the veteran's lifetime; or

(ii) Additional evidence submitted to VA before or after the veteran's death, consisting solely of service department records that existed at the time of a prior VA decision but were not previously considered by VA, provides a basis for reopening a claim finally decided during the veteran's lifetime and for awarding a total service-connected disability rating retroactively in accordance with §§ 3.156(c) and 3.400(q)(2) of this part for the period specified in paragraph (c) of this section; or

(iii) At the time of death, the veteran had a service-connected disability that was continuously rated totally disabling by VA for the period specified in paragraph (c) of this section, but was not receiving compensation because:

(A) VA was paying the compensation to the veteran's dependents;

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(B) VA was withholding the compensation under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 5314 to offset an indebtedness of the veteran;

(C) The veteran had not waived retired or retirement pay in order to receive compensation;

(D) VA was withholding payments under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2);

(E) VA was withholding payments because the veteran's whereabouts were unknown, but the veteran was otherwise entitled to continued payments based on a total service-connected disability rating; or

(F) VA was withholding payments under 38 U.S.C. 5308 but determines that benefits were payable under 38 U.S.C. 5309.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1311, 1314, and 1321)

[70 FR 72220, Dec. 2, 2005, as amended at 71 FR 44918, Aug. 8, 2006; 77 FR 40525, July 10, 2012; 80 FR 18117, Apr. 3, 2015]

§3.11 Homicide.

Any person who has intentionally and wrongfully caused the death of another person is not entitled to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or increased pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation by reason of such death. For the purpose of this section the term *dependency and indemnity compensation* includes benefits at dependency and indemnity compensation rates paid under 38 U.S.C. 1318.

[44 FR 22718, Apr. 17, 1979, as amended at 54 FR 31829, Aug. 2, 1989]

§3.12 Character of discharge.

(a) If the former service member did not die in service, pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable unless the period of service on which the claim is based was terminated by discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable. (38 U.S.C. 101(2)). A discharge under honorable conditions is binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs as to character of discharge.

(b) A discharge or release from service under one of the conditions specified in this section is a bar to the payment of benefits unless it is found that

the person was insane at the time of committing the offense causing such discharge or release or unless otherwise specifically provided (38 U.S.C. 5303(b)).

(c) Benefits are not payable where the former service member was discharged or released under one of the following conditions:

(1) As a conscientious objector who refused to perform military duty, wear the uniform, or comply with lawful order of competent military authorities.

(2) By reason of the sentence of a general court-martial.

(3) Resignation by an officer for the good of the service.

(4) As a deserter.

(5) As an alien during a period of hostilities, where it is affirmatively shown that the former service member requested his or her release. See §3.7(b).

(6) By reason of a discharge under other than honorable conditions issued as a result of an absence without official leave (AWOL) for a continuous period of at least 180 days. This bar to benefit entitlement does not apply if there are compelling circumstances to warrant the prolonged unauthorized absence. This bar applies to any person awarded an honorable or general discharge prior to October 8, 1977, under one of the programs listed in paragraph (h) of this section, and to any person who prior to October 8, 1977, had not otherwise established basic eligibility to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. The term *established basic eligibility to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits* means either a Department of Veterans Affairs determination that an other than honorable discharge was issued under conditions other than dishonorable, or an upgraded honorable or general discharge issued prior to October 8, 1977, under criteria other than those prescribed by one of the programs listed in paragraph (h) of this section. However, if a person was discharged or released by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial, only a finding of insanity (paragraph (b) of this section) or a decision of a board of correction of records established under 10 U.S.C. 1552 can establish basic eligibility to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

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The following factors will be considered in determining whether there are compelling circumstances to warrant the prolonged unauthorized absence.

(i) Length and character of service exclusive of the period of prolonged AWOL. Service exclusive of the period of prolonged AWOL should generally be of such quality and length that it can be characterized as honest, faithful and meritorious and of benefit to the Nation.

(ii) Reasons for going AWOL. Reasons which are entitled to be given consideration when offered by the claimant include family emergencies or obligations, or similar types of obligations or duties owed to third parties. The reasons for going AWOL should be evaluated in terms of the person's age, cultural background, educational level and judgmental maturity. Consideration should be given to how the situation appeared to the person himself or herself, and not how the adjudicator might have reacted. Hardship or suffering incurred during overseas service, or as a result of combat wounds of other service-incurred or aggravated disability, is to be carefully and sympathetically considered in evaluating the person's state of mind at the time the prolonged AWOL period began.

(iii) A valid legal defense exists for the absence which would have precluded a conviction for AWOL. Compelling circumstances could occur as a matter of law if the absence could not validly be charged as, or lead to a conviction of, an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. For purposes of this paragraph the defense must go directly to the substantive issue of absence rather than to procedures, technicalities or formalities.

(d) A discharge or release because of one of the offenses specified in this paragraph is considered to have been issued under dishonorable conditions.

(1) Acceptance of an undesirable discharge to escape trial by general court-martial.

(2) Mutiny or spying.

(3) An offense involving moral turpitude. This includes, generally, conviction of a felony.

(4) Willful and persistent misconduct. This includes a discharge under other than honorable conditions, if it is de-

termined that it was issued because of willful and persistent misconduct. A discharge because of a minor offense will not, however, be considered willful and persistent misconduct if service was otherwise honest, faithful and meritorious.

(5) Homosexual acts involving aggravating circumstances or other factors affecting the performance of duty. Examples of homosexual acts involving aggravating circumstances or other factors affecting the performance of duty include child molestation, homosexual prostitution, homosexual acts or conduct accompanied by assault or coercion, and homosexual acts or conduct taking place between service members of disparate rank, grade, or status when a service member has taken advantage of his or her superior rank, grade, or status.

(e) An honorable discharge or discharge under honorable conditions issued through a board for correction of records established under authority of 10 U.S.C. 1552 is final and conclusive on the Department of Veterans Affairs. The action of the board sets aside any prior bar to benefits imposed under paragraph (c) or (d) of this section.

(f) An honorable or general discharge issued prior to October 8, 1977, under authority other than that listed in paragraphs (h) (1), (2) and (3) of this section by a discharge review board established under 10 U.S.C. 1553 set aside any bar to benefits imposed under paragraph (c) or (d) of this section except the bar contained in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(g) An honorable or general discharge issued on or after October 8, 1977, by a discharge review board established under 10 U.S.C. 1553, sets aside a bar to benefits imposed under paragraph (d), but not paragraph (c), of this section provided that:

(1) The discharge is upgraded as a result of an individual case review;

(2) The discharge is upgraded under uniform published standards and procedures that generally apply to all persons administratively discharged or released from active military, naval or air service under conditions other than honorable; and

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(3) Such standards are consistent with historical standards for determining honorable service and do not contain any provision for automatically granting or denying an upgraded discharge.

(h) Unless a discharge review board established under 10 U.S.C. 1553 determines on an individual case basis that the discharge would be upgraded under uniform standards meeting the requirements set forth in paragraph (g) of this section, an honorable or general discharge awarded under one of the following programs does not remove any bar to benefits imposed under this section:

(1) The President's directive of January 19, 1977, implementing Presidential Proclamation 4313 of September 16, 1974; or

(2) The Department of Defense's special discharge review program effective April 5, 1977; or

(3) Any discharge review program implemented after April 5, 1977, that does not apply to all persons administratively discharged or released from active military service under other than honorable conditions.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5303 (e))

(i) No overpayments shall be created as a result of payments made after October 8, 1977, based on an upgraded honorable or general discharge issued under one of the programs listed in paragraph (h) of this section which would not be awarded under the standards set forth in paragraph (g) of this section. Accounts in payment status on or after October 8, 1977, shall be terminated the end of the month in which it is determined that the original other than honorable discharge was not issued under conditions other than dishonorable following notice from the appropriate discharge review board that the discharge would not have been upgraded under the standards set forth in paragraph (g) of this section, or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest. Accounts in suspense (either before or after October 8, 1977) shall be terminated on the date of last payment or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest.

(j) No overpayment shall be created as a result of payments made after October 8, 1977, in cases in which the bar

contained in paragraph (c)(6) of this section is for application. Accounts in payment status on or after October 8, 1977, shall be terminated at the end of the month in which it is determined that compelling circumstances do not exist, or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest. Accounts in suspense (either before or after October 8, 1977) shall be terminated on the date of last payment, or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest.

(k) *Uncharacterized separations.* Where enlisted personnel are administratively separated from service on the basis of proceedings initiated on or after October 1, 1982, the separation may be classified as one of the three categories of administrative separation that do not require characterization of service by the military department concerned. In such cases conditions of discharge will be determined by the VA as follows:

(1) *Entry level separation.* Uncharacterized administrative separations of this type shall be considered under conditions other than dishonorable.

(2) *Void enlistment or induction.* Uncharacterized administrative separations of this type shall be reviewed based on facts and circumstances surrounding separation, with reference to the provisions of §3.14 of this part, to determine whether separation was under conditions other than dishonorable.

(3) *Dropped from the rolls.* Uncharacterized administrative separations of this type shall be reviewed based on facts and circumstances surrounding separation to determine whether separation was under conditions other than dishonorable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Validity of enlistments. See §3.14. Revision of decisions. See §3.105. Effective dates. See §3.400(g). Minimum active-duty service requirement. See §3.12a.

[28 FR 123, Jan. 4, 1963, as amended at 41 FR 12656, Mar. 26, 1976; 43 FR 15153, Apr. 11, 1978; 45 FR 2318, Jan. 11, 1980; 49 FR 44099, Nov. 2, 1984; 62 FR 14823, Mar. 28, 1997]

§ 3.12a Minimum active-duty service requirement.

(a) *Definitions.* (1) The term *minimum period of active duty* means, for the purposes of this section, the shorter of the following periods.

(i) Twenty-four months of continuous active duty. Non-duty periods that are excludable in determining the Department of Veterans Affairs benefit entitlement (e.g., see § 3.15) are not considered as a break in service for continuity purposes but are to be subtracted from total time served.

(ii) The full period for which a person was called or ordered to active duty.

(2) The term *benefit* includes a right or privilege but does not include a refund of a participant's contributions under 38 U.S.C. Ch. 32.

(b) *Effect on Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.* Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, a person listed in paragraph (c) of this section who does not complete a minimum period of active duty is not eligible for any benefit under title 38, United States Code or under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on that period of active service.

(c) *Persons included.* Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section apply to the following persons:

(1) A person who originally enlists (enlisted person only) in a regular component of the Armed Forces after September 7, 1980 (a person who signed a delayed-entry contract with one of the service branches prior to September 8, 1980, and under that contract was assigned to a reserve component until entering on active duty after September 7, 1980, shall be considered to have enlisted on the date the person entered on active duty); and

(2) Any other person (officer as well as enlisted) who enters on active duty after October 16, 1981 and who has not previously completed a continuous period of active duty of at least 24 months or been discharged or released from active duty under 10 U.S.C. 1171 (early out).

(d) *Exclusions.* The provisions of paragraph (b) of this section are not applicable to the following cases:

(1) To a person who is discharged or released under 10 U.S.C. 1171 or 1173 (early out or hardship discharge).

(2) To a person who is discharged or released from active duty for a disability adjudged service connected without presumptive provisions of law, or who at time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability.

(3) To a person with a compensable service-connected disability.

(4) To the provision of a benefit for or in connection with a service-connected disability, condition, or death.

(5) To benefits under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) *Dependent or survivor benefits—(1) General.* If a person is, by reason of this section, barred from receiving any benefits under title 38, United States Code (or under any other law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on a period of active duty, the person's dependents or survivors are also barred from receiving benefits based on the same period of active duty.

(2) *Exceptions.* Paragraph (e)(1) of this section does not apply to benefits under chapters 19 and 37 of title 38, United States Code. (38 U.S.C. 5303A)

[47 FR 24549, June 7, 1982]

§ 3.13 Discharge to change status.

(a) A discharge to accept appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer, or to change from a Reserve or Regular commission to accept a commission in the other component, or to reenlist is a conditional discharge if it was issued during one of the following periods:

(1) World War I; prior to November 11, 1918. As to reenlistments, this subparagraph applies only to Army and National Guard. No involuntary extension or other restrictions existed on Navy enlistments.

(2) World War II, the Korean conflict or the Vietnam era; prior to the date the person was eligible for discharge under the point or length of service system, or under any other criteria in effect.

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(3) Peacetime service; prior to the date the person was eligible for an unconditional discharge.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, the entire period of service under the circumstances stated in paragraph (a) of this section constitutes one period of service and entitlement will be determined by the character of the final termination of such period of active service except that, for death pension purposes, § 3.3(b)(3) and (4) is controlling as to basic entitlement when the conditions prescribed therein are met.

(c) Despite the fact that no unconditional discharge may have been issued, a person shall be considered to have been unconditionally discharged or released from active military, naval or air service when the following conditions are met:

(1) The person served in the active military, naval or air service for the period of time the person was obligated to serve at the time of entry into service;

(2) The person was not discharged or released from such service at the time of completing that period of obligation due to an intervening enlistment or reenlistment; and

(3) The person would have been eligible for a discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable at that time except for the intervening enlistment or reenlistment.

[26 FR 1566, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 4024, Apr. 27, 1962; 32 FR 13224, Sept. 19, 1967; 43 FR 15154, Apr. 11, 1978; 46 FR 23926, Apr. 29, 1981]

§ 3.14 Validity of enlistments.

Service is valid unless the enlistment is voided by the service department.

(a) *Enlistment not prohibited by statute.* Where an enlistment is voided by the service department for reasons other than those stated in paragraph (b) of this section, service is valid from the date of entry upon active duty to the date of voidance by the service department. Benefits may not be paid, however, unless the discharge is held to have been under conditions other than dishonorable. Generally discharge for concealment of a physical or mental defect except incompetency or insanity which would have prevented enlistment

will be held to be under dishonorable conditions.

(b) *Statutory prohibition.* Where an enlistment is voided by the service department because the person did not have legal capacity to contract for a reason other than minority (as in the case of an insane person) or because the enlistment was prohibited by statute (a deserter or person convicted of a felony), benefits may not be paid based on that service even though a disability was incurred during such service. An undesirable discharge by reason of the fraudulent enlistment voids the enlistment from the beginning.

(c) *Misrepresentation of age.* Active service which was terminated because of concealment of minority or misrepresentation of age is honorable if the veteran was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable. Service is valid from the date of entry upon active duty to the date of discharge.

(d) *Honorable discharges.* Determinations as to honorable service will be made by the service departments and the finding shall be binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs, but, in the case of an alien, the effect of the discharge will be governed by § 3.7(b).

[26 FR 1567, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 4024, Apr. 27, 1962]

§ 3.15 Computation of service.

For nonservice-connected or service-connected benefits, active service is countable exclusive of time spent on an industrial, agricultural, or indefinite furlough, time lost on absence without leave (without pay), under arrest (without acquittal), in desertion, while undergoing sentence of court-martial or a period following release from active duty under the circumstances outlined in § 3.41. In claims based on Spanish-American War service, leave authorized under General Order No. 130, War Department, is included.

CROSS REFERENCE: Duty periods. See § 3.6(b)(6).

[40 FR 16064, Apr. 9, 1975]

§ 3.16 Service pension.

In computing the 70 or 90 days required under § 3.3(a) active service which began before or extended beyond

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the war period will be included if such service was continuous. Broken periods of service during a war period may be added together to meet the requirement for length of service.

[41 FR 18299, May 3, 1976, as amended at 44 FR 45932, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.17 Disability and death pension; Mexican border period and later war periods.

In computing the 90 days' service required for pension entitlement (see § 3.3), there will be included active service which began before and extended into the Mexican border period or ended during World War I, or began or ended during World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era or the Persian Gulf War, if such service was continuous. Service during different war periods may be combined with service during any other war period to meet the 90 days' service requirement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521)

[37 FR 6676, Apr. 1, 1972, as amended at 44 FR 45932, Aug. 6, 1979; 56 FR 57986, Nov. 15, 1991]

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§ 3.20 Surviving spouse's benefit for month of veteran's death.

(a) Where the veteran died on or after December 1, 1962, and before October 1, 1982, the rate of death pension or dependency and indemnity compensation otherwise payable for the surviving spouse for the month in which the death occurred shall be not less than the amount of pension or compensation which would have been payable to or for the veteran for that month but for his or her death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5310)

(b) Where the veteran dies on or after October 1, 1982, the surviving spouse may be paid death pension or dependency and indemnity compensation for the month in which the veteran died at a rate equal to the amount of compensation or pension which would have been payable to the veteran for that month had death not occurred, but only if such rate is equal to or greater than the monthly rate of death pension or dependency and indemnity compensation to which the surviving

spouse is entitled. Otherwise, no payment of death pension or dependency and indemnity compensation may be made for the month in which the veteran died.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5111(c))

(c)(1) Where a veteran receiving compensation or pension dies after December 31, 1996, the surviving spouse, if not entitled to death compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or death pension for the month of death, shall be entitled to a benefit for that month in an amount equal to the amount of compensation or pension the veteran would have received for that month but for his or her death.

(2) A payment issued to a deceased veteran as compensation or pension for the month in which death occurred shall be treated as payable to that veteran's surviving spouse, if the surviving spouse is not entitled to death compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation or death pension for that month and, if negotiated or deposited, shall be considered to be the benefit to which the surviving spouse is entitled under paragraph (c)(1) of this section. However, if such payment is in an amount less than the amount of the benefit under paragraph (c)(1) of this section, the unpaid difference shall be treated in the same manner as an accrued benefit under § 3.1000 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5310(b))

[48 FR 34471, July 29, 1983, as amended at 62 FR 35422, July 1, 1997; 64 FR 30392, June 8, 1999]

§ 3.21 Monetary rates.

The rates of compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children, and section 306 and old-law disability and death pension, are published in tabular form in appendix B of the Veterans Benefits Administration Manual M21-1 and are to be given the same force and effect as if published in the regulations (title 38, Code of Federal Regulations). The maximum annual rates of improved pension payable under Pub. L. 95-588 (92 Stat. 2497) are set forth in §§ 3.23 and 3.24. The monthly rates and annual income limitations applicable

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to parents' dependency and indemnity compensation are set forth in § 3.25.

CROSS REFERENCES: Section 306 pension. See § 3.1(u). Old-law pension. See § 3.1(v). Improved pension. See § 3.1(w).

[44 FR 45932, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.22 DIC benefits for survivors of certain veterans rated totally disabled at time of death.

(a) Even though a veteran died of non-service-connected causes, VA will pay death benefits to the surviving spouse or children in the same manner as if the veteran's death were service-connected, if:

(1) The veteran's death was not the result of his or her own willful misconduct, and

(2) At the time of death, the veteran was receiving, or was entitled to receive, compensation for service-connected disability that was:

(i) Rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least 10 years immediately preceding death;

(ii) Rated by VA as totally disabling continuously since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately preceding death; or

(iii) Rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of not less than one year immediately preceding death, if the veteran was a former prisoner of war.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1318(b))

(b) For purposes of this section, "entitled to receive" means that the veteran filed a claim for disability compensation during his or her lifetime and one of the following circumstances is satisfied:

(1) The veteran would have received total disability compensation at the time of death for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling for the period specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section but for clear and unmistakable error committed by VA in a decision on a claim filed during the veteran's lifetime; or

(2) Additional evidence submitted to VA before or after the veteran's death, consisting solely of service department records that existed at the time of a prior VA decision but were not pre-

viously considered by VA, provides a basis for reopening a claim finally decided during the veteran's lifetime and for awarding a total service-connected disability rating retroactively in accordance with §§ 3.156(c) and 3.400(q)(2) of this part for the relevant period specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section; or

(3) At the time of death, the veteran had a service-connected disability that was continuously rated totally disabling by VA for the period specified in paragraph (a)(2), but was not receiving compensation because:

(i) VA was paying the compensation to the veteran's dependents;

(ii) VA was withholding the compensation under authority of 38 U.S.C. 5314 to offset an indebtedness of the veteran;

(iii) The veteran had not waived retired or retirement pay in order to receive compensation;

(iv) VA was withholding payments under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2);

(v) VA was withholding payments because the veteran's whereabouts were unknown, but the veteran was otherwise entitled to continued payments based on a total service-connected disability rating; or

(vi) VA was withholding payments under 38 U.S.C. 5308 but determines that benefits were payable under 38 U.S.C. 5309.

(c) For purposes of this section, "rated by VA as totally disabling" includes total disability ratings based on unemployability (§ 4.16 of this chapter).

(d) To be entitled to benefits under this section, a surviving spouse must have been married to the veteran—

(1) For at least 1 year immediately preceding the date of the veteran's death; or

(2) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1318)

(e) *Effect of judgment or settlement.* If a surviving spouse or child eligible for benefits under paragraph (a) of this section receives any money or property pursuant to a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action or other right of

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recovery for damages for the death of the veteran, benefits payable under paragraph (a) of this section shall not be paid for any month following the month in which such money or property is received until the amount of benefits that would otherwise have been payable under paragraph (a) of this section equals the total of the amount of money received and the fair market value of the property received. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply, however, to any portion of such benefits payable for any period preceding the end of the month in which such money or property of value is received.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(f) *Social security and worker's compensation.* Benefits received under social security or worker's compensation are not subject to recoupment under paragraph (e) of this section even though such benefits may have been awarded pursuant to a judicial proceeding.

(g) *Beneficiary's duty to report.* Any person entitled to benefits under paragraph (a) of this section shall promptly report to the Department of Veterans Affairs the receipt of any money or property received pursuant to a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action or other right of recovery for damages for the death of the veteran. The amount to be reported is the total of the amount of money received and the fair market value of property received. Expenses incident to recovery, such as attorney's fees, may not be deducted from the amount to be reported.

(h) *Relationship to survivor benefit plan.* For the purpose of 10 U.S.C. 1448(d) and 1450(c) eligibility for benefits under paragraph (a) of this section shall be deemed eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1318)

CROSS REFERENCES: Marriage dates. See § 3.54. Homicide. See § 3.11.

[44 FR 22718, Apr. 17, 1979, as amended at 48 FR 41161, Sept. 14, 1983; 53 FR 23235, June 21, 1988; 54 FR 31829, Aug. 2, 1989; 65 FR 3391, Jan. 21, 2000; 65 FR 43699, July 14, 2000; 70 FR 72220, Dec. 2, 2005; 77 FR 40526, July 10, 2012]

§ 3.23 Improved pension rates—Veterans and surviving spouses.

(a) *Maximum annual rates of improved pension.* The maximum annual rates of improved pension for the following categories of beneficiaries shall be the amounts specified in 38 U.S.C. 1521 and 1542, as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rates will be published in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER. (1) Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) or (c))

(2) Veterans in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(d))

(3) Veterans who are housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(e))

(4) Two veterans married to one another; combined rates.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(f))

(5) Surviving spouse alone or with a child or children of the deceased veteran in custody of the surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(b) or (c))

(6) Surviving spouses in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(d))

(7) Surviving spouses who are housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(e))

(b) *Reduction for income.* The maximum rates of improved pension in paragraph (a) of this section shall be reduced by the amount of the countable annual income of the veteran or surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541)

(c) *Mexican border period and World War I veterans.* The applicable maximum annual rate payable to a Mexican border period or World War I veteran under this section shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1521(g), as increased from time

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to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rate will be published in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(g))

(d) *Definitions of terms used in this section*—(1) *Dependent*. A veteran's spouse or child. A veteran's spouse who resides apart from the veteran and is estranged from the veteran may not be considered the veteran's dependent unless the spouse receives reasonable support contributions from the veteran. (Note that under § 3.60 a veteran and spouse who reside apart are considered to be living together unless they are estranged.) A child of a veteran not in custody of the veteran and to whose support the veteran is not reasonably contributing, may not be considered the veteran's dependent.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(b))

(2) *In need of aid and attendance*. As defined in § 3.351(b).

(3) *Housebound*. As defined in § 3.351(d)(2), (f). This term also includes a veteran who has a disability or disabilities evaluated as 60 percent or more disabling in addition to a permanent and totally disabling condition. See § 3.351(d)(1).

(4) *Veteran's annual income*. This term includes the veteran's annual income, the annual income of the veteran's dependent spouse, and the annual income of each child of the veteran (other than a child for whom increased pension is not payable under 38 U.S.C. 1522(b)) in the veteran's custody or to whose support the veteran is reasonably contributing (to the extent such child's income is reasonably available to or for the veteran, unless in the judgment of the Department of Veterans Affairs to do so would work a hardship on the veteran.) There is a rebuttable presumption that all of such a child's income is reasonably available to or for the veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521 (c), (h))

(5) *Surviving spouse's annual income*. This term includes the surviving spouse's annual income and the annual income of each child of the veteran

(other than a child for whom increased pension is not payable under 38 U.S.C. 1543(a)(2)) in the custody of the surviving spouse to the extent that such child's income is reasonably available to or for the surviving spouse, unless in the judgment of the Department of Veterans Affairs to do so would work a hardship on the surviving spouse. There is a rebuttable presumption that all of such a child's income is available to or for the surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(c), (g))

(6) *Reasonable availability and hardship*. For the purposes of paragraphs (d)(4) and (d)(5) of this section, a child's income shall be considered "reasonably available" when it can be readily applied to meet the veteran's or surviving spouse's expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance, and "hardship" shall be held to exist when annual expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance exceed the sum of countable annual income plus VA pension entitlement. *Expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance* include expenses for basic necessities (such as food, clothing, shelter, etc.) and other expenses, determined on a case-by-case basis, which are necessary to support a reasonable quality of life.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Improved pension. See § 3.1(w). Child. See § 3.57(d). Definition of *living with*. See § 3.60. Exclusions from income. See § 3.272.

[44 FR 45933, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 52 FR 34907, Sept. 14, 1987; 53 FR 23235, June 21, 1988]

§ 3.24 Improved pension rates—Surviving children.

(a) *General*. The provisions of this section apply to children of a deceased veteran not in the custody of a surviving spouse who has basic eligibility to receive improved pension. Children in custody of a surviving spouse who has basic eligibility to receive improved pension do not have separate entitlement. Basic eligibility to receive improved pension means that the surviving spouse is in receipt of improved pension or could become entitled to receive improved pension except for the amount of the surviving

spouse's countable annual income or the size of the surviving spouse's estate (See § 3.274(c)). Under § 3.23(d)(5) the countable annual income of a surviving spouse includes the countable annual income of each child of the veteran in custody of the surviving spouse to the extent the child's income is reasonably available to or for the surviving spouse, unless in the judgment of the Department of Veterans Affairs to do so would work a hardship on the surviving spouse.

(b) *Child with no personal custodian or in the custody of an institution.* In cases in which there is no personal custodian, *i.e.*, there is no person who has the legal right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the child's welfare (See § 3.57(d)), or the child is in the custody of an institution, pension shall be paid to the child at the annual rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1542, as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced by the amount of the child's countable annual income. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rate will be published in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(c) *Child in the custody of person legally responsible for support—(1) Single child.* Pension shall be paid to a child in the custody of a person legally responsible for the child's support at an annual rate equal to the difference between the rate for a surviving spouse and one child under § 3.23(a)(5), and the sum of the annual income of such child and the annual income of such person or, the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section, whichever is less.

(2) *More than one child.* Pension shall be paid to children in custody of a person legally responsible for the children's support at an annual rate equal to the difference between the rate for a surviving spouse and an equivalent number of children (but not including any child who has countable annual income equal to or greater than the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section) and the sum of the countable annual income of the person legally responsible for support and the combined countable annual income of the children (but not including the income of any child whose count-

able annual income is equal to or greater than the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section, or the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section times the number of eligible children, whichever is less).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1542)

CROSS REFERENCES: Child. See § 3.57(d). Exclusions from income. See § 3.272.

[44 FR 45933, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 52 FR 34907, Sept. 14, 1987; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996]

§ 3.25 Parent's dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC)—Method of payment computation.

Monthly payments of parents' DIC shall be computed in accordance with the following formulas:

(a) *One parent.* Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, if there is only one parent, the monthly rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(b)(1), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced by \$.08 for each dollar of such parent's countable annual income in excess of \$800. No payments of DIC may be made under this paragraph, however, if such parent's countable annual income exceeds the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(b)(3), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, and no payment of DIC to a parent under this paragraph may be less than \$5 a month.

(b) *One parent who has remarried.* If there is only one parent and the parent has remarried and is living with the parent's spouse, DIC shall be paid under paragraph (a) or paragraph (d) of this section, whichever shall result in the greater benefit being paid to the veteran's parent. In the case of remarriage, the total combined annual income of the parent and the parent's spouse shall be counted in determining the monthly rate of DIC.

(c) *Two parents not living together.* The rate computation method in this paragraph applies to:

- (1) Two parents who are not living together, or
- (2) An unremarried parent when both parents are living and the other parent has remarried.

The monthly rate of DIC paid to such parent shall be the rate specified in 38

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U.S.C. 1315(c)(1), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced by an amount no greater than \$.08 for each dollar of such parent's countable annual income in excess of \$800, except that no payments of DIC may be made under this paragraph if such parent's countable annual income exceeds the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(c)(3), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, and no payment of DIC to a parent under this paragraph may be less than \$5 monthly. Each time there is a rate increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the amount of the reduction under this paragraph shall be recomputed to provide, as nearly as possible, for an equitable distribution of the rate increase. The results of this computation method shall be published in schedular format in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER as provided in paragraph (f) of this section.

(d) *Two parents living together or remarried parents living with spouse.* The rate computation method in this paragraph applies to each parent living with another parent and to each remarried parent when both parents are alive. The monthly rate of DIC paid to such parents shall be the rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(d)(1), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced to an amount no greater than \$.08 for each dollar of such parent's and spouse's combined countable annual income in excess of \$1,000 except that no payments of DIC to a parent under this paragraph may be less than \$5 monthly. Each time there is a rate increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the amount of the reduction under this paragraph shall be recomputed to provide, as nearly as possible, for an equitable distribution of the rate increase. The results of this computation method shall be published in schedular format in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER as provided in paragraph (f) of this section.

(e) *Aid and attendance.* The monthly rate of DIC payable to a parent under this section shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(g), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, if such parent is:

- (1) A patient in a nursing home, or

- (2) Helpless or blind, or so nearly helpless or blind as to need or require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

(f) *Rate publication.* Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rates will be published in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[52 FR 34907, Sept. 14, 1987, as amended at 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996]

§ 3.26 Section 306 and old-law pension annual income limitations.

(a) The annual income limitations for section 306 pension shall be the amounts specified in section 306(a)(2)(A) of Pub. L. 95-588, as increased from time to time under section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95-588.

(b) If a beneficiary under section 306 pension is in need of aid and attendance, the annual income limitation under paragraph (a) of this section shall be increased in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 1521(d), as in effect on December 31, 1978.

(c) The annual income limitations for old-law pension shall be the amounts specified in section 306(b)(3) of Pub. L. 95-588, as increased from time to time under section 306(b)(4) of Pub. L. 95-588.

(d) Each time there is an increase under section 306 (a)(3) or (b)(4) of Pub. L. 95-588, the actual income limitations will be published in the "Notices" section of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[52 FR 34908, Sept. 14, 1987]

§ 3.27 Automatic adjustment of benefit rates.

(a) *Improved pension.* Whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of title II of the Social Security Act, VA shall, effective on the dates such increases become effective, increase by the same percentage each maximum annual rate of pension.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5312(a))

(b) *Parents' dependency and indemnity compensation—maximum annual income limitation and maximum monthly rates.*

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Whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of title II of the Social Security Act, VA shall, effective on the dates such increases become effective, increase by the same percentage the annual income limitations and the maximum monthly rates of dependency indemnity compensation for parents.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5312(b)(1))

(c) *Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea.* Whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of Title II of the Social Security Act, VA shall, effective on the dates such increases become effective, increase by the same percentage the monthly allowance rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805(b)(3), 1815(d), 1821, 5312)

(d) *Medal of Honor pension.* Beginning in the year 2004, VA shall, effective December 1 of each year, increase the monthly Medal of Honor pension by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of Title II of the Social Security Act are increased effective December 1 of such year.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1562(e))

(e) *Publishing requirements.* Increases in pension rates, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation rates and income limitation, the monthly allowance rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 and the Medal of Honor pension made under this section shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805(b)(3), 1815(d), 5312(c)(1))

[44 FR 45934, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 52 FR 34908, Sept. 14, 1987; 62 FR 51278, Sept. 30, 1997; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 68 FR 55467, Sept. 26, 2003; 76 FR 4247, Jan. 25, 2011]

§ 3.28 Automatic adjustment of section 306 and old-law pension income limitations.

Whenever the maximum annual rates of improved pension are increased by

reason of the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312, the following will be increased by the same percentage effective the same date:

(a) The maximum annual income limitations applicable to continued receipt of section 306 and old-law pension; and

(b) The dollar amount of a veteran's spouse's income that is excludable in determining the income of a veteran for section 306 pension purposes. (See § 3.262(b)(2))

These increases shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER at the same time that increases under § 3.27 are published.

(Authority: Sec. 306, Pub. L. 95-588).

[52 FR 34908, Sept. 14, 1987]

CROSS REFERENCES: Section 306 and old-law pension annual income limitations. See § 3.26.

§ 3.29 Rounding.

(a) *Annual rates.* Where the computation of an increase in improved pension rates under §§ 3.23 and 3.24 would otherwise result in a figure which includes a fraction of a dollar, the benefit rate will be adjusted to the next higher dollar amount. This method of computation will also apply to increases in old-law and section 306 pension annual income limitations under § 3.26, including the income of a spouse which is excluded from a veteran's countable income, and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation benefit rates and annual income limitations under § 3.25.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5312(c)(2))

(b) *Monthly or other periodic pension rates.* After determining the monthly or other periodic rate of improved pension under §§ 3.273 and 3.30 or the rate payable under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95-588 (92 Stat. 2508), the resulting rate, if not a multiple of one dollar, will be rounded down to the nearest whole dollar amount. The provisions of this paragraph apply with respect to amounts of pension payable for periods beginning on or after June 1, 1983, under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1521,

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1541 or 1542, or under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95-588.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5123)

(c) *Monthly rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18.* When increasing the monthly monetary allowance rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea, VA will round any resulting rate that is not an even dollar amount to the next higher dollar.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805(b)(3), 1815(d), 1821, 5312)

[48 FR 34471, July 29, 1983, as amended at 65 FR 35282, June 2, 2000; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 75 FR 4247, Jan. 25, 2011]

§ 3.30 Frequency of payment of improved pension and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).

Payment shall be made as shown in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section; however, beneficiaries receiving payment less frequently than monthly may elect to receive payment monthly in cases in which other Federal benefits would otherwise be denied.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(a) *Improved pension—Monthly.* Payment shall be made monthly if the annual rate payable is \$228 or more.

(b) *Improved pension—Quarterly.* Payment shall be made every 3 months on or about March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1, if the annual rate payable is at least \$144 but less than \$228.

(c) *Improved pension—Semiannually.* Payment shall be made every 6 months on or about June 1, and December 1, if the annual rate payable is at least \$72 but less than \$144.

(d) *Improved pension—Annually.* Payment shall be made annually on or about June 1, if the annual rate payable is less than \$72.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1508)

(e) *Parents' DIC—Semiannually.* Benefits shall be paid every 6 months on or about June 1, and December 1, if the amount of the annual benefit is less

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than 4 percent of the maximum annual rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1315.

(f) *Payment of less than one dollar.* Payments of less than \$1 shall not be made.

CROSS REFERENCE: Pension. See § 3.3(a)(3), (b)(4).

[44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 51 FR 1790, Jan. 15, 1986; 53 FR 7903, Mar. 11, 1988; 57 FR 10425, Mar. 26, 1992; 71 FR 52290, Sept. 5, 2006]

§ 3.31 Commencement of the period of payment.

Regardless of VA regulations concerning effective dates of awards, and except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, payment of monetary benefits based on original, supplemental, or increased awards of compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea may not be made for any period prior to the first day of the calendar month following the month in which the award became effective. However, beneficiaries will be deemed to be in receipt of monetary benefits during the period between the effective date of the award and the date payment commences for the purpose of all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs except that nothing in this section will be construed as preventing the receipt of retired or retirement pay prior to the effective date of waiver of such pay in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5305.

(a) *Increased award defined.* For the purposes of this section the term *increased award* means an award which is increased because of an added dependent, increase in disability or disability rating, or reduction in income. The term also includes elections of improved pension under section 306 of Pub. L. 95-588 and awards pursuant to paragraphs 29 and 30 of the Schedule for Rating Disabilities except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) *General rule of applicability.* The provisions of this section apply to all original, supplemental, or increased awards unless such awards provide only

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for continuity of entitlement with no increase in rate of payment.

(c) *Specific exclusions.* The provisions of this section do not apply to the following types of awards.

(1) Surviving spouse's rate for the month of a veteran's death (for exception see § 3.20(b))

(2) In cases where military retired or retirement pay is greater than the amount of compensation payable, compensation will be paid as of the effective date of waiver of such pay. However, in cases where the amount of compensation payable is greater than military retired or retirement pay, payment of the available difference for any period prior to the effective date of total waiver of such pay is subject to the general provisions of this section.

(3) Adjustments of awards—such as in the case of original or increased apportionments or the termination of any withholding, reduction, or suspension by reason of:

- (i) Recoupment,
- (ii) An offset to collect indebtedness,
- (iii) Institutionalization (hospitalization),
- (iv) Incompetency,
- (v) Incarceration,
- (vi) An estate that exceeds the limitation for certain hospitalized incompetent veterans, or
- (vii) Discontinuance of apportionments.

(4) Increases resulting solely from the enactment of legislation—such as

(i) Cost-of-living increases in compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation,

(ii) Increases in Improved Pension, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 pursuant to § 3.27, or

(iii) Changes in the criteria for statutory award designations.

(5) Temporary total ratings pursuant to paragraph 29 of the Schedule for Rating Disabilities when the entire period of hospitalization or treatment, including any period of post-hospitalization convalescence, commences and terminates within the same calendar month. In such cases the period of payment shall commence on the

first day of the month in which the hospitalization or treatment began.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805, 1815, 1821, 1832, 5111)

[48 FR 34472, July 29, 1983; 48 FR 37031, Aug. 16, 1983, as amended at 49 FR 47003, Nov. 30, 1984; 65 FR 35282, June 2, 2000; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4247, Jan. 25, 2011; 84 FR 166, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.32 Exchange rates for foreign currencies.

When determining the rates of pension or parents' DIC or the amounts of burial, plot or headstone allowances or accrued benefits to which a claimant or beneficiary may be entitled, income received or expenses paid in a foreign currency shall be converted into U.S. dollar equivalents employing quarterly exchange rates established by the Department of the Treasury.

(a) *Pension and parents' DIC.* (1) Because exchange rates for foreign currencies cannot be determined in advance, rates of pension and parents' DIC shall be projected using the most recent quarterly exchange rate and shall be adjusted retroactively based upon actual exchange rates when an annual eligibility verification report is filed.

(2) Retroactive adjustments due to fluctuations in exchange rates shall be calculated using the average of the four most recent quarterly exchange rates. If the claimant reports income and expenses for a prior reporting period, the retroactive adjustment shall be calculated using the average of the four quarterly rates which were the most recent available on the closing date of the twelve-month period for which income and expenses are reported.

(b) *Burial, plot or headstone allowances and accrued benefits.* Payment amounts for burial, plot or headstone allowances and claims for accrued benefits as reimbursement from the person who bore the expenses of a deceased beneficiary's last illness or burial shall be determined using the quarterly exchange rate for the quarter in which the expenses forming the basis of the claim were paid. If the claim is filed by an unpaid creditor, however, the quarterly

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rate for the quarter in which the veteran died shall apply. When entitlement originates during a quarter for which the Department of the Treasury has not yet published a quarterly rate, amounts due shall be calculated using the most recent quarterly exchange rate.

CROSS REFERENCES: Accrued benefits. See § 3.1000. Accrued benefits payable to foreign beneficiaries. See § 3.1008.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[55 FR 8140, Mar. 7, 1990; 55 FR 10867, Mar. 23, 1990]

GENERAL

§ 3.40 Philippine and Insular Forces.

(a) *Regular Philippine Scouts.* Service in the Philippine Scouts (except that described in paragraph (b) of this section), the Insular Force of the Navy, Samoan Native Guard, and Samoan Native Band of the Navy is included for pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and burial allowance. Benefits are payable in dollars at the full-dollar rate.

(b) *Other Philippine Scouts.* Service of persons enlisted under section 14, Pub. L. 190, 79th Congress (Act of October 6, 1945), is included for compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation. Except as provided in §§ 3.42 and 3.43, benefits based on service described in this paragraph are payable at a rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law. All enlistments and reenlistments of Philippine Scouts in the Regular Army between October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, inclusive, were made under the provisions of Pub. L. 190 as it constituted the sole authority for such enlistments during that period. This paragraph does not apply to officers who were commissioned in connection with the administration of Pub. L. 190.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107)

(c) *Commonwealth Army of the Philippines.* (1) Service is included, for compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and burial allowance, from and after the dates and hours, respectively, when they were called into service of the Armed Forces of the United States by orders issued from time to time by the General Officer,

U.S. Army, pursuant to the Military Order of the President of the United States dated July 26, 1941. Service as a guerrilla under the circumstances outlined in paragraph (d) of this section is also included. Except as provided in §§ 3.42 and 3.43, benefits based on service described in this paragraph are payable at a rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107)

(2) Unless the record shows examination at time of entrance into the Armed Forces of the United States, such persons are not entitled to the presumption of soundness. This also applies upon reentering the Armed Forces after a period of inactive service.

(d) *Guerrilla service.* (1) Persons who served as guerrillas under a commissioned officer of the United States Army, Navy or Marine Corps, or under a commissioned officer of the Commonwealth Army recognized by and cooperating with the United States Forces are included. (See paragraph (c) of this section.) Service as a guerrilla by a member of the Philippine Scouts or the Armed Forces of the United States is considered as service in his or her regular status. (See paragraph (a) of this section.)

(2) The following certifications by the service departments will be accepted as establishing guerrilla service:

(i) Recognized guerrilla service;

(ii) Unrecognized guerrilla service under a recognized commissioned officer only if the person was a former member of the United States Armed Forces (including the Philippine Scouts), or the Commonwealth Army. This excludes civilians.

A certification of *Anti-Japanese Activity* will not be accepted as establishing guerrilla service.

(e) *Combined service.* Where a veteran who had Commonwealth Army or guerrilla service and also had other service, wartime or peacetime, in the Armed Forces of the United States, has disabilities which are compensable separately on a dollar and a \$0.50 for each dollar authorized basis, and the disabilities are combined under the authority

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contained in 38 U.S.C. 1157, the evaluation for which dollars are payable will be first considered and the difference between this evaluation and the combined evaluation will be the basis for computing the amount payable at the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized.

CROSS REFERENCE: Computation of service. See § 3.15.

[26 FR 1565, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 31 FR 14454, Nov. 10, 1966; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 66 FR 66767, Dec. 27, 2001; 71 FR 8220, Feb. 16, 2006]

§ 3.41 Philippine service.

(a) For a Regular Philippine Scout or a member of one of the regular components of the Philippine Commonwealth Army while serving with Armed Forces of United States, the period of active service will be from the date certified by the Armed Forces as the date of enlistment or date of report for active duty whichever is later to date of release from active duty, discharge, death, or in the case of a member of the Philippine Commonwealth Army June 30, 1946, whichever was earlier. Release from active duty includes:

(1) Leaving one's organization in anticipation of or due to the capitulation.

(2) Escape from prisoner-of-war status.

(3) Parole by the Japanese.

(4) Beginning of missing-in-action status, except where factually shown at that time he was with his or her unit or death is presumed to have occurred while carried in such status: *Provided, however*, That where there is credible evidence that he was alive after commencement of his or her missing-in-action status, the presumption of death will not apply for Department of Veterans Affairs purposes.

(5) Capitulation on May 6, 1942, except that periods of recognized guerrilla service or unrecognized guerrilla service under a recognized commissioned officer or periods of service in units which continued organized resistance against Japanese prior to formal capitulation will be considered return to active duty for period of such service.

(b) Active service of a Regular Philippine Scout or a member of the Philippine Commonwealth Army serving with the Armed Forces of the United

States will include a *prisoner-of-war* status immediately following a period of active duty, or a period of recognized guerrilla service or unrecognized guerrilla service under a recognized commissioned officer. In those cases where following release from active duty as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section, the veteran is factually found by the Department of Veterans Affairs to have been injured or killed by the Japanese because of anti-Japanese activities or his or her former service in the Armed Forces of the United States, such injury or death may be held to have been incurred in active service for Department of Veterans Affairs purposes. Determination shall be based on all available evidence, including service department reports, and consideration shall be given to the character and length of the veteran's former active service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

(c) A prisoner-of-war status based upon arrest during general zonification will not be sufficient of itself to bring a case within the definition of return to military control.

(d) The active service of members of the irregular forces *guerrilla* will be the period certified by the service department.

[26 FR 1566, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 26 FR 4612, May 26, 1961; Redesignated at 66 FR 66767, Dec. 27, 2001]

§ 3.42 Compensation at the full-dollar rate for certain Filipino veterans residing in the United States.

(a) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section:

(1) *United States (U.S.)* means the states, territories and possessions of the United States; the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(2) *Residing in the U.S.* means that an individual's principal, actual dwelling place is in the U.S. and that the individual meets the residency requirements of paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(3) *Citizen of the U.S.* means any individual who acquires U.S. citizenship through birth in the territorial U.S., birth abroad as provided under title 8, United States Code, or through naturalization, and has not renounced his

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or her U.S. citizenship, or had such citizenship cancelled, revoked, or otherwise terminated.

(4) *Lawfully admitted for permanent residence* means that an individual has been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the U.S. as an immigrant by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under title 8, United States Code, and still has this status.

(b) *Eligibility requirements.* Compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation is payable at the full-dollar rate, based on service described in § 3.40(b), (c), or (d), to a veteran or a veteran's survivor who is residing in the U.S. and is either:

(1) A citizen of the U.S., or

(2) An alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S.

(c) *Evidence of eligibility.* (1) A valid original or copy of one of the following documents is required to prove that the veteran or the veteran's survivor is a natural born citizen of the U.S.:

(i) A valid U.S. passport;

(ii) A birth certificate showing that he or she was born in the U.S.; or

(iii) A Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the U.S. issued by a U.S. consulate abroad.

(2) Only verification by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA that a veteran or a veteran's survivor is a naturalized citizen of the U.S., or a valid U.S. passport, will be sufficient proof of such status.

(3) Only verification by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA that a veteran or a veteran's survivor is an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S. will be sufficient proof of such status.

(4) VA will not pay benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section unless the evidence establishes that the veteran or survivor is lawfully residing in the U.S.

(i) Such evidence should identify the veteran's or survivor's name and relevant dates, and may include:

(A) A valid driver's license issued by the state of residence;

(B) Employment records, which may consist of pay stubs, W-2 forms, and certification of the filing of Federal, State, or local income tax returns;

(C) Residential leases, rent receipts, utility bills and receipts, or other relevant documents showing dates of utility service at a leased residence;

(D) Hospital or medical records showing medical treatment or hospitalization, and showing the name of the medical facility or treating physician;

(E) Property tax bills and receipts; and

(F) School records.

(ii) A Post Office box mailing address in the veteran's name or the name of the veteran's survivor does not constitute evidence showing that the veteran or veteran's survivor is lawfully residing in the United States.

(d) *Continued eligibility.* (1) In order to continue receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section, a veteran or a veteran's survivor must be physically present in the U.S. for at least 183 days of each calendar year in which he or she receives payments at the full-dollar rate, and may not be absent from the U.S. for more than 60 consecutive days at a time unless good cause is shown. However, if a veteran or a veteran's survivor becomes eligible for full-dollar rate benefits for the first time on or after July 1 of any calendar year, the 183-day rule will not apply during that calendar year. VA will not consider a veteran or a veteran's survivor to have been absent from the U.S. if he or she left and returned to the U.S. on the same date.

(2) A veteran or a veteran's survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section must notify VA within 30 days of leaving the U.S., or within 30 days of losing either his or her U.S. citizenship or lawful permanent resident alien status. When a veteran or a veteran's survivor no longer meets the eligibility requirements of paragraph (b) of this section, VA will reduce his or her payment to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the date determined under § 3.505. If such veteran or survivor regains his or her U.S. citizenship or lawful permanent resident alien status, VA will restore full-dollar rate benefits, effective the date the veteran or survivor meets the eligibility requirements in paragraph (b) of this section.

(3) When requested to do so by VA, a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section must verify that he or she continues to meet the residency and citizenship or permanent resident alien status requirements of paragraph (b) of this section. VA will advise the veteran or survivor at the time of the request that the verification must be furnished within 60 days and that failure to do so will result in the reduction of benefits. If the veteran or survivor fails to furnish the evidence within 60 days, VA will reduce his or her payment to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized, as provided in § 3.652.

(4) A veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section must promptly notify VA of any change in his or her address. If mail from VA to the veteran or survivor is returned to VA by the U.S. Postal Service, VA will make reasonable efforts to determine the correct mailing address. If VA is unable to determine the correct mailing address through reasonable efforts, VA will reduce benefit payments to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under law, effective on the date determined under § 3.505.

(e) *Effective date for restored eligibility.* In the case of a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate, if VA reduces his or her payment to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, VA will resume payments at the full-dollar rate, if otherwise in order, effective the first day of the month following the date on which he or she again meets the requirements. However, such increased payments will be retroactive no more than one year prior to the date on which VA receives evidence that he or she again meets the requirements.

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900-0655)

[66 FR 66767, Dec. 27, 2001, as amended at 71 FR 8220, Feb. 16, 2006; 72 FR 9, Jan. 3, 2007]

§ 3.43 Burial benefits at the full-dollar rate for certain Filipino veterans residing in the United States on the date of death.

(a) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section:

(1) *United States (U.S.)* means the states, territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(2) *Residing in the U.S.* means an individual's principal, actual dwelling place was in the U.S. When death occurs outside the U.S., VA will consider the deceased individual to have been residing in the U.S. on the date of death if the individual maintained his or her principal actual dwelling place in the U.S. until his or her most recent departure from the U.S., and he or she had been physically absent from the U.S. less than 61 consecutive days when he or she died.

(3) *Citizen of the U.S.* means any individual who acquires U.S. citizenship through birth in the territorial U.S., birth abroad as provided under title 8, United States Code, or through naturalization, and has not renounced his or her U.S. citizenship, or had such citizenship cancelled, revoked, or otherwise terminated.

(4) *Lawfully admitted for permanent residence* means that the individual was lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the U.S. as an immigrant by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under title 8, United States Code, and on the date of death, still had this status.

(b) *Eligibility requirements.* VA will pay burial benefits under chapter 23 of title 38, United States Code, at the full-dollar rate, based on service described in § 3.40(c) or (d), when an individual who performed such service dies after November 1, 2000, or based on service described in § 3.40(b) when an individual who performed such service dies after December 15, 2003, and was on the date of death:

- (1) Residing in the U.S.; and
- (2) Either—
 - (i) A citizen of the U.S., or
 - (ii) An alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S.; and
- (3) Either—

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(i) Receiving compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code; or

(ii) Would have satisfied the disability, income and net worth requirements of § 3.3(a)(3) of this part and would have been eligible for pension if the veteran's service had been deemed to be active military, naval, or air service.

(c) *Evidence of eligibility.* (1) In a claim for full-dollar rate burial payments based on the deceased veteran having been a natural born citizen of the U.S., a valid original or copy of one of the following documents is required:

(i) A valid U.S. passport;

(ii) A birth certificate showing that he or she was born in the U.S.; or

(iii) A Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the U.S. issued by a U.S. consulate abroad.

(2) In a claim based on the deceased veteran having been a naturalized citizen of the U.S., only verification of that status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA, or a valid U.S. passport, will be sufficient proof for purposes of eligibility for full-dollar rate benefits.

(3) In a claim based on the deceased veteran having been an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S., only verification of that status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA will be sufficient proof for purposes of eligibility for full-dollar rate benefits.

(4) VA will not pay benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section unless the evidence establishes that the veteran was lawfully residing in the U.S. on the date of death.

(i) Such evidence should identify the veteran's name and relevant dates, and may include:

(A) A valid driver's license issued by the state of residence;

(B) Employment records, which may consist of pay stubs, W-2 forms, and certification of the filing of Federal, State, or local income tax returns;

(C) Residential leases, rent receipts, utility bills and receipts, or other relevant documents showing dates of utility service at a leased residence;

(D) Hospital or medical records showing medical treatment or hospitalization of the veteran or survivor, and

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showing the name of the medical facility or treating physician;

(E) Property tax bills and receipts; and

(F) School records.

(ii) A Post Office box mailing address in the veteran's name does not constitute evidence showing that the veteran was lawfully residing in the United States on the date of death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107, 501(a))

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900-0655)

[66 FR 66767, Dec. 27, 2001, as amended at 71 FR 8221, Feb. 16, 2006; 72 FR 9, Jan. 3, 2007]

RELATIONSHIP

§ 3.50 Spouse and surviving spouse.

(a) *Spouse.* "Spouse" means a person of the opposite sex whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of § 3.1(j).

(b) *Surviving spouse.* Except as provided in § 3.52, "surviving spouse" means a person of the opposite sex whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of § 3.1(j) and who was the spouse of the veteran at the time of the veteran's death and:

(1) Who lived with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the veteran's death except where there was a separation which was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the spouse; and

(2) Except as provided in § 3.55, has not remarried or has not since the death of the veteran and after September 19, 1962, lived with another person of the opposite sex and held himself or herself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person.

[62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

§ 3.52 Marriages deemed valid.

Where an attempted marriage of a claimant to the veteran was invalid by reason of a legal impediment, the marriage will nevertheless be deemed valid if:

(a) The marriage occurred 1 year or more before the veteran died or existed for any period of time if a child was born of the purported marriage or was

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born to them before such marriage (see § 3.54(d)), and

(b) The claimant entered into the marriage without knowledge of the impediment, and

(c) The claimant cohabited with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of his or her death as outlined in § 3.53, and

(d) No claim has been filed by a legal surviving spouse who has been found entitled to gratuitous death benefits other than accrued monthly benefits covering a period prior to the veteran's death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(a))

CROSS REFERENCE: Definition, marriage. See § 3.205(c).

[26 FR 1567, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 1215, Feb. 9, 1962; 32 FR 13224, Sept. 19, 1967; 41 FR 18299, May 3, 1976]

§ 3.53 Continuous cohabitation.

(a) *General.* The requirement that there must be continuous cohabitation from the date of marriage to the date of death of the veteran will be considered as having been met when the evidence shows that any separation was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the surviving spouse. Temporary separations which ordinarily occur, including those caused for the time being through fault of either party, will not break the continuity of the cohabitation.

(b) *Findings of fact.* The statement of the surviving spouse as to the reason for the separation will be accepted in the absence of contradictory information. If the evidence establishes that the separation was by mutual consent and that the parties lived apart for purposes of convenience, health, business, or any other reason which did not show an intent on the part of the surviving spouse to desert the veteran, the continuity of the cohabitation will not be considered as having been broken. State laws will not control in determining questions of desertion; however, due weight will be given to findings of fact in court decisions made during the life of the veteran on issues

subsequently involved in the application of this section.

[41 FR 18300, May 3, 1976, as amended at 59 FR 32659, June 24, 1994]

§ 3.54 Marriage dates.

A surviving spouse may qualify for pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation if the marriage to the veteran occurred before or during his or her service or, if married to him or her after his or her separation from service, before the applicable date stated in his section.

(a) *Pension.* Death pension may be paid to a surviving spouse who was married to the veteran:

(1) One year or more prior to the veteran's death, or

(2) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage, or

(3) Prior to the applicable delimiting dates, as follows:

(i) Civil War—June 27, 1905.

(ii) Indian wars—March 4, 1917.

(iii) Spanish-American War—January 1, 1938.

(iv) Mexican border period and World War I—December 14, 1944.

(v) World War II—January 1, 1957.

(vi) Korean conflict—February 1, 1965.

(vii) Vietnam era—May 8, 1985.

(viii) Persian Gulf War—January 1, 2001.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 532(d), 534(c), 536(c), 541(e), 541(f))

(b) *Compensation.* Death compensation may be paid to a surviving spouse who, with respect to date of marriage, could have qualified as a surviving spouse for death compensation under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs in effect on December 31, 1957, or who was married to the veteran:

(1) Before the expiration of 15 years after termination of the period of service in which the injury or disease which caused the veteran's death was incurred or aggravated, or

(2) One year or more, or

(3) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1102)

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(c) *Dependency and indemnity compensation.* Dependency and indemnity compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1310(a) may be paid to the surviving spouse of a veteran who died on or after January 1, 1957, who was married to the veteran:

(1) Before the expiration of 15 years after the termination of the period of service in which the injury or disease causing the death of the veteran was incurred or aggravated, or

(2) For 1 year or more, or

(3) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1304)

(d) *Child born.* The term *child born of the marriage* means a birth on or after the date of the marriage on which the surviving spouse's entitlement is predicated. The term *born to them before the marriage* means a birth prior to the date of such marriage. Either term includes a fetus advanced to the point of gestation required to constitute a birth under the law of the jurisdiction in which the fetus was delivered.

(e) *More than one marriage to veteran.* For periods commencing on or after January 1, 1958, where a surviving spouse has been married legally to a veteran more than once, the date of the original marriage will be used in determining whether the statutory requirement as to date of marriage has been met.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(b))

[26 FR 1567, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 6498, July 10, 1962; 32 FR 13224, Sept. 19, 1967; 40 FR 16064, Apr. 9, 1975; 40 FR 48680, Oct. 17, 1975; 41 FR 18300, May 3, 1976; 44 FR 22718, Apr. 17, 1979; 54 FR 31829, Aug. 2, 1989; 56 FR 5756, Feb. 13, 1991; 56 FR 57986, Nov. 15, 1991; 65 FR 3392, Jan. 21, 2000]

§ 3.55 Reinstatement of benefits eligibility based upon terminated marital relationships.

(a) *Surviving spouse.* (1) Remarriage of a surviving spouse shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse if the marriage:

(i) Was void, or

(ii) Has been annulled by a court having basic authority to render annulment decrees, unless it is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs

that the annulment was obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(2) On or after January 1, 1971, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated prior to November 1, 1990, or terminated by legal proceedings commenced prior to November 1, 1990, by an individual who, but for the remarriage, would be considered the surviving spouse, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse provided that the marriage:

(i) Has been terminated by death, or

(ii) Has been dissolved by a court with basic authority to render divorce decrees unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the divorce was secured through fraud by the surviving spouse or by collusion.

(3) On or after October 1, 1998, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated by death, divorce, or annulment, will not bar the furnishing of dependency and indemnity compensation, unless the Secretary determines that the divorce or annulment was secured through fraud or collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(4) On or after December 1, 1999, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated by death, divorce, or annulment, will not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, unless the Secretary determines that the divorce or annulment was secured through fraud or collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d))

(5) On or after January 1, 1971, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to him or her after he or she terminates the relationship, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990.

(6) On or after October 1, 1998, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of dependency

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and indemnity compensation to the surviving spouse if he or she ceases living with such other person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as such other person's spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(7) On or after December 1, 1999, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 to the surviving spouse if he or she ceases living with such other person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as such other person's spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d))

(8) On or after January 1, 1971, the fact that benefits to a surviving spouse may previously have been barred because his or her conduct or a relationship into which he or she had entered had raised an inference or presumption that he or she had remarried or had been determined to be open and notorious adulterous cohabitation, or similar conduct, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse after he or she terminates the conduct or relationship, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990.

(9) *Benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1781 for a surviving spouse who remarries after age 55.* (i) On or after February 4, 2003, the remarriage of a surviving spouse after age 55 shall not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, subject to the limitation in paragraph (a)(9)(ii) of this section.

(ii) A surviving spouse who remarried after the age of 55, but before December 6, 2002, may be eligible for benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781 pursuant to paragraph (a)(9)(i) only if the application for such benefits was received by VA before December 16, 2004.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103).

(10) *Benefits for a surviving spouse who remarries after age 57.* (i) On or after January 1, 2004, the remarriage of a surviving spouse after the age of 57 shall not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311, medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, subject to the limitation in paragraph (a)(10)(ii) of this section.

(ii) A surviving spouse who remarried after the age of 57, but before December 16, 2003, may be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311, medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 pursuant to paragraph (a)(10)(i) only if the application for such benefits was received by VA before December 16, 2004.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103).

(b) *Child.* (1) Marriage of a child shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to or on account of such child, if the marriage:

(i) Was void, or

(ii) Has been annulled by a court having basic authority to render annulment decrees, unless it is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the annulment was obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(2) On or after January 1, 1975, marriage of a child terminated prior to November 1, 1990, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to or for such child provided that the marriage:

(i) Has been terminated by death, or

(ii) Has been dissolved by a court with basic authority to render divorce decrees unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the divorce was secured through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103; 105 Stat. 424, 106 Stat. 4322)

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CROSS REFERENCES: Evidence. See §§ 3.206 and 3.207. Termination of marital relationship or conduct. See § 3.215.

[58 FR 32444, June 10, 1993, as amended at 60 FR 52863, Oct. 11, 1995; 64 FR 30245, June 7, 1999; 65 FR 43700, July 14, 2000; 71 FR 29084, May 19, 2006]

§ 3.56 [Reserved]

§ 3.57 Child.

(a) *General.* (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (a)(2) through (4) of this section, the term *child* of the veteran means an unmarried person who is a legitimate child, a child legally adopted before the age of 18 years, a stepchild who acquired that status before the age of 18 years and who is a member of the veteran's household or was a member of the veteran's household at the time of the veteran's death, or an illegitimate child; and

(i) Who is under the age of 18 years; or

(ii) Who, before reaching the age of 18 years, became permanently incapable of self-support; or

(iii) Who, after reaching the age of 18 years and until completion of education or training (but not after reaching the age of 23 years) is pursuing a course of instruction at an educational institution approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs. For the purposes of this section and § 3.667, the term "educational institution" means a permanent organization that offers courses of instruction to a group of students who meet its enrollment criteria, including schools, colleges, academies, seminaries, technical institutes, and universities. The term also includes home schools that operate in compliance with the compulsory attendance laws of the States in which they are located, whether treated as private schools or home schools under State law. The term "home schools" is limited to courses of instruction for grades kindergarten through 12.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A), 104(a))

(2) For the purposes of determining entitlement of benefits based on a child's school attendance, the term *child* of the veteran also includes the following unmarried persons:

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(i) A person who was adopted by the veteran between the ages of 18 and 23 years.

(ii) A person who became a stepchild of the veteran between the ages of 18 and 23 years and who is a member of the veteran's household or was a member of the veteran's household at the time of the veteran's death.

(3) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (c) and (e) of this section, the term *child* also includes a person who became permanently incapable of self-support before reaching the age of 18 years, who was a member of the veteran's household at the time he or she became 18 years of age, and who was adopted by the veteran, regardless of the age of such person at the time of adoption.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A))

(4) For purposes of any benefits provided under 38 U.S.C. 1115, Additional compensation for dependents, the term *child* does not include a child of a veteran who is adopted out of the family of the veteran. This limitation does not apply to any benefit administered by the Secretary that is payable directly to a child in the child's own right, such as dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 CFR 3.5.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4), 501, 1115).

(b) *Stepchild.* The term means a legitimate or an illegitimate child of the veteran's spouse. A child of a surviving spouse whose marriage to the veteran is deemed valid under the provisions of § 3.52, and who otherwise meets the requirements of this section is included.

(c) *Adopted child.* Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, the term means a child adopted pursuant to a final decree of adoption, a child adopted pursuant to an unrescinded interlocutory decree of adoption while remaining in the custody of the adopting parent (or parents) during the interlocutory period, and a child who has been placed for adoption under an agreement entered into by the adopting parent (or parents) with any agency authorized under law to so act, unless and until such agreement is terminated, while the child remains in the custody of the adopting parent (or parents) during the period of placement

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for adoption under such agreement. The term includes, as of the date of death of a veteran, such a child who:

(1) Was living in the veteran's household at the time of the veteran's death, and

(2) Was adopted by the veteran's spouse under a decree issued within 2 years after August 25, 1959, or the veteran's death whichever is later, and

(3) Was not receiving from an individual other than the veteran or the veteran's spouse, or from a welfare organization which furnishes services or assistance for children, recurring contributions of sufficient size to constitute the major portion of the child's support.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4))

(d) Definition of *child custody*. The provisions of this paragraph are for the purpose of determining entitlement to improved pension under §§3.23 and 3.24.

(1) Custody of a child shall be considered to rest with a veteran, surviving spouse of a veteran or person legally responsible for the child's support if that person has the legal right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the welfare and care of the child. A child of the veteran residing with the veteran, surviving spouse of the veteran who is the child's natural or adoptive parent, or person legally responsible for the child's support shall be presumed to be in the custody of that individual. Where the veteran, surviving spouse, or person legally responsible for the child's support has not been divested of legal custody, but the child is not residing with that individual, the child shall be considered in the custody of the individual for purposes of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

(2) The term *person legally responsible for the child's support* means a person who is under a legally imposed obligation (e.g., by statute or court order) to provide for the child's support, as well as a natural or adoptive parent who has not been divested of legal custody. If the child's natural or adoptive parent has remarried, the stepparent may also be considered a person legally responsible for the child's support. A child shall be considered in the joint custody of his or her stepparent and

natural or adoptive parent so long as the natural or adoptive parent and the stepparent are not estranged and residing apart, and the natural or adoptive parent has not been divested of legal custody. When a child is in such joint custody the combined income of the natural or adoptive parent and the stepparent shall be included as income of the person legally responsible for support under §3.24(c).

(3) A person having custody of a child prior to the time the child attains age 18 shall be considered to retain custody of the child for periods on and after the child's 18th birthday, unless the person is divested of legal custody. This applies without regard to when a child reaches the age of majority under applicable State law. This also applies without regard to whether the child was entitled to pension prior to age 18, or whether increased pension was payable to a veteran or surviving spouse on behalf of the child prior to the child's 18th birthday. If the child's custodian dies after the child has attained age 18, the child shall be considered to be in custody of a successor custodian provided the successor custodian has the right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the welfare and care of the child.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1521(c), 1541(c))

(e) *Child adopted under foreign law—*

(1) *General*. The provisions of this paragraph are applicable to a person adopted under the laws of any jurisdiction other than a State. The term *State* is defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(20) and also includes the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The term *veteran* includes, for the purposes of this paragraph, a Commonwealth Army veteran or new Philippine Scout as defined in 38 U.S.C. 3566.

(2) *Adopted child of living veteran*. A person residing outside any of the States shall not be considered to be a legally adopted child of a veteran during the lifetime of the veteran unless all of the following conditions are met.

(i) The person was less than 18 years of age at the time of adoption.

(ii) The person is receiving one-half or more of the person's support from the veteran.

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(iii) The person is not in the custody of the person's natural parent unless the natural parent is the veteran's spouse.

(iv) The person is residing with the veteran (or in the case of divorce following adoption, with the divorced spouse who is also a natural or adoptive parent) except for periods during which the person is residing apart from the veteran for purposes of full-time attendance at an educational institution or during which the person or the veteran is confined in a hospital, nursing home, other health-care facility, or other institution.

(3) *Adopted child of deceased veteran.* A person shall not be considered to have been a legally adopted child of a veteran as of the date of the veteran's death and thereafter unless one of the following conditions is met.

(i) The veteran was entitled to and was receiving for the person a dependent's allowance or similar monetary benefit payable under title 38, United States Code at any time within the 1-year period immediately preceding the veteran's death; or

(ii) The person met the requirements of paragraph (e)(2) of this section for a period of at least 1 year prior to the veteran's death.

(4) *Verification.* In the case of an adopted child of a living veteran, the requirements of paragraphs (e)(2)(ii), (iii) and (iv) of this section are for prospective application. That is, in addition to meeting all of the requirements of paragraph (e)(2) of this section at the time of initial adjudication, benefits are not payable thereafter for or to a child adopted under the laws of any jurisdiction other than a State unless the requirements of paragraphs (e)(2)(ii), (iii) and (iv) of this section continue to be met. Consequently, whenever Department of Veterans Affairs benefits are payable to or for a child adopted under the laws of any jurisdiction other than a State, and the veteran who adopted the child is living, the beneficiary shall submit, upon Department of Veterans Affairs request, a report, or other evidence, to determine if the requirements of paragraph (e)(2)(ii), (iii), and (iv) of this section were met for any period for which payment was made for or to the child and

whether such requirements will continue to be met for future entitlement periods. Failure to submit the requested report or evidence within a reasonable time from date of request may result in termination of benefits payable for or to the child.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4), 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Improved pension rates. See § 3.23. Improved pension rates; surviving children. See § 3.24. Child adopted out of family. See § 3.58. Child's relationship. See § 3.210. Helplessness. See § 3.403(a)(1). Helplessness. See § 3.503(a)(3). Veteran's benefits not apportionable. See § 3.458. School attendance. See § 3.667. Helpless children—Spanish-American and prior wars. See § 3.950.

[44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979 and 45 FR 1878, Jan. 9, 1980, as amended at 45 FR 25391, Apr. 15, 1980; 49 FR 47003, Nov. 30, 1984; 65 FR 12116, Mar. 8, 2000; 72 FR 6959, Feb. 14, 2007; 80 FR 48451, Aug. 13, 2015]

§ 3.58 Child adopted out of family.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, a child of a veteran adopted out of the family of the veteran either prior or subsequent to the veteran's death is nevertheless a *child* within the meaning of that term as defined by § 3.57 and is eligible for benefits payable under all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) A child of a veteran adopted out of the family of the veteran is not a child within the meaning of § 3.57 for purposes of any benefits provided under 38 U.S.C. 1115, Additional compensation for dependents.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A), 1115).

CROSS REFERENCES: Child. See § 3.57. Veteran's benefits not apportionable. See § 3.458.

[80 FR 48451, Aug. 13, 2015]

§ 3.59 Parent.

(a) The term *parent* means a natural mother or father (including the mother of an illegitimate child or the father of an illegitimate child if the usual family relationship existed), mother or father through adoption, or a person who for a period of not less than 1 year stood in the relationship of a parent to a veteran at any time before his or her entry into active service.

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(b) Foster relationship must have begun prior to the veteran's 21st birthday. Not more than one father and one mother, as defined, will be recognized in any case. If two persons stood in the relationship of father or mother for 1 year or more, the person who last stood in such relationship before the veteran's last entry into active service will be recognized as the *parent*.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(5))

[26 FR 1568, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.60 Definition of "living with".

For the purposes of determining entitlement to pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521, a person shall be considered as living with his or her spouse even though they reside apart unless they are estranged.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(h)(2))

[44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979]

ADMINISTRATIVE

§ 3.100 Delegations of authority.

(a) Authority is delegated to the Under Secretary for Benefits and to supervisory or adjudicative personnel within the jurisdiction of the Veterans Benefits Administration designated by the Under Secretary to make findings and decisions under the applicable laws, regulations, precedents, and instructions, as to entitlement of claimants to benefits under all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs governing the payment of monetary benefits to veterans and their dependents, within the jurisdiction of the Compensation Service or the Pension and Fiduciary Service.

(b) Authority is delegated to the Director, Compensation Service, and the Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service, and to personnel of each service designated by its Director to determine whether a claimant or payee has forfeited the right to gratuitous benefits or to remit a prior forfeiture pursuant

to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 6103 or 6104. See § 3.905.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 512(a))

[29 FR 7547, June 12, 1964, as amended at 31 FR 14455, Nov. 10, 1966; 37 FR 10442, May 23, 1972; 53 FR 3207, Feb. 4, 1988; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996; 78 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014]

§ 3.102 Reasonable doubt.

It is the defined and consistently applied policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad interpretation, consistent, however, with the facts shown in every case. When, after careful consideration of all procurable and assembled data, a reasonable doubt arises regarding service origin, the degree of disability, or any other point, such doubt will be resolved in favor of the claimant. By reasonable doubt is meant one which exists because of an approximate balance of positive and negative evidence which does not satisfactorily prove or disprove the claim. It is a substantial doubt and one within the range of probability as distinguished from pure speculation or remote possibility. It is not a means of reconciling actual conflict or a contradiction in the evidence. Mere suspicion or doubt as to the truth of any statements submitted, as distinguished from impeachment or contradiction by evidence or known facts, is not justifiable basis for denying the application of the reasonable doubt doctrine if the entire, complete record otherwise warrants invoking this doctrine. The reasonable doubt doctrine is also applicable even in the absence of official records, particularly if the basic incident allegedly arose under combat, or similarly strenuous conditions, and is consistent with the probable results of such known hardships.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[50 FR 34458, Aug. 26, 1985, as amended at 66 FR 45630, Aug. 29, 2001]

§ 3.103 Procedural due process and other rights.

(a) *Statement of policy.* Every claimant has the right to written notice of the decision made on his or her claim, the right to a hearing, and the right of representation. Proceedings before VA

are ex parte in nature, and it is the obligation of VA to assist a claimant in developing the facts pertinent to the claim and to render a decision which grants every benefit that can be supported in law while protecting the interests of the Government. The provisions of this section apply to all claims for benefits and relief, and decisions thereon, within the purview of this part 3.

(b) *The right to notice—*

(1) *General.* Claimants and their representatives are entitled to notice of any decision made by VA affecting the payment of benefits or the granting of relief. Such notice will clearly set forth the elements described under paragraph (f) of this section, the right to a hearing on any issue involved in the claim as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the right of representation, and the right, as well as the necessary procedures and time limits to initiate a higher-level review, supplemental claim, or appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(2) *Advance notice and opportunity for hearing.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, no award of compensation, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation shall be terminated, reduced or otherwise adversely affected unless the beneficiary has been notified of such adverse action and has been provided a period of 60 days in which to submit evidence for the purpose of showing that the adverse action should not be taken.

(3) *Exceptions.* In lieu of advance notice and opportunity for a hearing, VA will send a written notice to the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary at the same time it takes an adverse action under the following circumstances:

(i) An adverse action based solely on factual and unambiguous information or statements as to income, net worth, or dependency or marital status that the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary provided to VA in writing or orally (under the procedures set forth in § 3.217(b)), with knowledge or notice that such information would be used to calculate benefit amounts.

(ii) An adverse action based upon the beneficiary's or fiduciary's failure to

return a required eligibility verification report.

(iii) Evidence reasonably indicates that a beneficiary is deceased. However, in the event that VA has received a death certificate, a terminal hospital report verifying the death of a beneficiary or a claim for VA burial benefits, no notice of termination (contemporaneous or otherwise) will be required.

(iv) An adverse action based upon a written and signed statement provided by the beneficiary to VA renouncing VA benefits (see § 3.106 on renouncement).

(v) An adverse action based upon a written statement provided to VA by a veteran indicating that he or she has returned to active service, the nature of that service, and the date of reentry into service, with the knowledge or notice that receipt of active service pay precludes concurrent receipt of VA compensation or pension (see § 3.654 regarding active service pay).

(vi) An adverse action based upon a garnishment order issued under 42 U.S.C. 659(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(4) *Restoration of benefits.* VA will restore retroactively benefits that were reduced, terminated, or otherwise adversely affected based on oral information or statements if within 30 days of the date on which VA issues the notification of adverse action the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary asserts that the adverse action was based upon information or statements that were inaccurate or upon information that was not provided by the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary. This will not preclude VA from taking subsequent action that adversely affects benefits.

(c) *Submission of evidence—(1) General rule.* VA will include in the record, any evidence whether documentary, testimonial, or in other form, submitted by the claimant in support of a pending claim and any issue, contention, or argument a claimant may offer with respect to a claim, except as prescribed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section and § 3.2601(f).

(2) *Treatment of evidence received after notice of a decision.* The evidentiary record for a claim before the agency of

original jurisdiction closes when VA issues notice of a decision on the claim. The agency of original jurisdiction will not consider, or take any other action on evidence that is submitted by a claimant, associated with the claims file, or constructively received by VA as described in paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section, after notice of decision on a claim, and such evidence will not be considered part of the record at the time of any decision by the agency of original jurisdiction, except as described in § 3.156(c) and under the following circumstances:

(i) *Receipt of a complete claim.* The agency of original jurisdiction subsequently receives a complete application for a supplemental claim or initial claim; or

(ii) *Board and higher-level review returns.* A claim is pending readjudication after identification of a duty to assist error (which includes an error resulting from constructive receipt of evidence prior to the notice of decision), during a higher-level review or appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Those events reopen the record and any evidence previously submitted to the agency of original jurisdiction or associated with the claims file while the record was closed will become part of the evidentiary record to be considered upon readjudication.

(iii) *Constructive receipt of VA treatment records.* Records within the actual custody of the Veterans Health Administration are deemed constructively received by the Veterans Benefits Administration at the time when the Veterans Benefits Administration had knowledge of the existence of said records through information furnished by the claimant sufficient to locate those records (see 38 U.S.C. 5103A(c)).

(d) *The right to a hearing.* (1) Upon request, a claimant is entitled to a hearing on any issue involved in a claim within the purview of part 3 of this chapter before VA issues notice of a decision on an initial or supplemental claim. A hearing is not available in connection with a request for higher-level review under § 3.2601. VA will provide the place of hearing in the VA field office having original jurisdiction over the claim, or at the VA office nearest the claimant's home having ad-

judicative functions, or video-conference capabilities, or, subject to available resources and solely at the option of VA, at any other VA facility or federal building at which suitable hearing facilities are available. VA will provide one or more employees who have original determinative authority of such issues to conduct the hearing and be responsible for establishment and preservation of the hearing record. Upon request, a claimant is entitled to a hearing in connection with proposed adverse actions before one or more VA employees having original determinative authority who did not participate in the proposed action. All expenses incurred by the claimant in connection with the hearing are the responsibility of the claimant.

(2) The purpose of a hearing is to permit the claimant to introduce into the record, in person, any available evidence which he or she considers relevant and any arguments or contentions with respect to the facts and applicable law which he or she may consider pertinent. All testimony will be under oath or affirmation. The claimant is entitled to produce witnesses, but the claimant and witnesses must be present. The agency of original jurisdiction will not normally schedule a hearing for the sole purpose of receiving argument from a representative. It is the responsibility of the VA employees conducting the hearings to explain fully the issues and suggest the submission of evidence which the claimant may have overlooked and which would be of advantage to the claimant's position. To assure clarity and completeness of the hearing record, questions which are directed to the claimant and to witnesses are to be framed to explore fully the basis for claimed entitlement rather than with an intent to refute evidence or to discredit testimony.

(e) *The right to representation.* Subject to the provisions of §§ 14.626 through 14.637 of this title, claimants are entitled to representation of their choice at every stage in the prosecution of a claim.

(f) *Notification of decisions.* The claimant or beneficiary and his or her representative will be notified in writing of decisions affecting the payment of

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benefits or granting of relief. Written notification must include in the notice letter or enclosures or a combination thereof, all of the following elements:

- (1) Identification of the issues adjudicated;
- (2) A summary of the evidence considered;
- (3) A summary of the laws and regulations applicable to the claim;
- (4) A listing of any findings made by the adjudicator that are favorable to the claimant under § 3.104(c);
- (5) For denied claims, identification of the element(s) required to grant the claim(s) that were not met;
- (6) If applicable, identification of the criteria required to grant service connection or the next higher-level of compensation;
- (7) An explanation of how to obtain or access evidence used in making the decision; and
- (8) A summary of the applicable review options under § 3.2500 available for the claimant to seek further review of the decision.

(Authority:38 U.S.C. 501, 1115, 1506, 5104)

[55 FR 13527, Apr. 11, 1990; 55 FR 17530, Apr. 25, 1990, as amended at 55 FR 20148, May 15, 1990; 55 FR 25308, June 21, 1990; 57 FR 56993, Dec. 2, 1992; 58 FR 16360, Mar. 26, 1993; 58 FR 59366, Nov. 9, 1993; 59 FR 6218, Feb. 10, 1994; 59 FR 6901, Feb. 14, 1994; 66 FR 56613, Nov. 9, 2001; 76 FR 52574, Aug. 23, 2011; 77 FR 23129, Apr. 18, 2012; 84 FR 166, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.104 Binding nature of decisions.

(a) *Binding decisions.* A decision of a VA rating agency is binding on all VA field offices as to conclusions based on the evidence on file at the time VA issues written notification in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5104. A binding agency decision is not subject to revision except by the Board of Veterans' Appeals, by Federal court order, or as provided in §§ 3.105, 3.2500, and 3.2600.

(b) *Binding administrative determinations.* Current determinations of line of duty, character of discharge, relationship, dependency, domestic relations questions, homicide, and findings of fact of death or presumptions of death made in accordance with existing instructions, and by application of the same criteria and based on the same facts, by either an Adjudication activity or an Insurance activity are bind-

ing one upon the other in the absence of clear and unmistakable error.

(c) *Favorable findings.* Any finding favorable to the claimant made by either a VA adjudicator, as described in § 3.103(f)(4), or by the Board of Veterans' Appeals, as described in § 20.801(a) of this chapter, is binding on all subsequent agency of original jurisdiction and Board of Veterans' Appeals adjudicators, unless rebutted by evidence that identifies a clear and unmistakable error in the favorable finding. For purposes of this section, a finding means a conclusion either on a question of fact or on an application of law to facts made by an adjudicator concerning the issue(s) under review.

[29 FR 1462, Jan. 29, 1964, as amended at 29 FR 7547, June 12, 1964; 56 FR 65846, Dec. 19, 1991; 66 FR 21874, May 2, 2001; 84 FR 167, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.105 Revision of decisions.

The provisions of this section apply except where an award was based on an act of commission or omission by the payee, or with his or her knowledge (§ 3.500(b)); there is a change in law or a Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or a change in interpretation of law or a Department of Veterans Affairs issue (§ 3.114); or the evidence establishes that service connection was clearly illegal. The provisions with respect to the date of discontinuance of benefits are applicable to running awards. Where the award has been suspended, and it is determined that no additional payments are in order, the award will be discontinued effective date of last payment.

(a)(1) *Error in final decisions.* Decisions are final when the underlying claim is finally adjudicated as provided in § 3.160(d). Final decisions will be accepted by VA as correct with respect to the evidentiary record and the law that existed at the time of the decision, in the absence of clear and unmistakable error. At any time after a decision is final, the claimant may request, or VA may initiate, review of the decision to determine if there was a clear and unmistakable error in the decision. Where evidence establishes such error, the prior decision will be reversed or amended.

(i) *Definition of clear and unmistakable error.* A clear and unmistakable error is a very specific and rare kind of error. It is the kind of error, of fact or of law, that when called to the attention of later reviewers compels the conclusion, to which reasonable minds could not differ, that the result would have been manifestly different but for the error. If it is not absolutely clear that a different result would have ensued, the error complained of cannot be clear and unmistakable. Generally, either the correct facts, as they were known at the time, were not before VA, or the statutory and regulatory provisions extant at the time were incorrectly applied.

(ii) *Effective date of reversed or revised decisions.* For the purpose of authorizing benefits, the rating or other adjudicative decision which constitutes a reversal or revision of a prior decision on the grounds of clear and unmistakable error has the same effect as if the corrected decision had been made on the date of the reversed decision. Except as provided in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section, where an award is reduced or discontinued because of administrative error or error in judgment, the provisions of § 3.500(b)(2) will apply.

(iii) *Record to be reviewed.* Review for clear and unmistakable error in a prior final decision of an agency of original jurisdiction must be based on the evidentiary record and the law that existed when that decision was made. The duty to assist in § 3.159 does not apply to requests for revision based on clear and unmistakable error.

(iv) *Change in interpretation.* Clear and unmistakable error does not include the otherwise correct application of a statute or regulation where, subsequent to the decision being challenged, there has been a change in the interpretation of the statute or regulation.

(v) *Limitation on Applicability.* Decisions of an agency of original jurisdiction on issues that have been decided on appeal by the Board or a court of competent jurisdiction are not subject to revision under this subsection.

(vi) *Duty to assist not applicable.* For examples of situations that are not clear and unmistakable error see 38 CFR 20.1403(d).

(vii) *Filing Requirements—(A) General.* A request for revision of a decision based on clear and unmistakable error must be in writing, and must be signed by the requesting party or that party's authorized representative. The request must include the name of the claimant; the name of the requesting party if other than the claimant; the applicable Department of Veterans Affairs file number; and the date of the decision to which the request relates. If the applicable decision involved more than one issue, the request must identify the specific issue, or issues, to which the request pertains.

(B) *Specific allegations required.* The request must set forth clearly and specifically the alleged clear and unmistakable error, or errors, of fact or law in the prior decision, the legal or factual basis for such allegations, and why the result would have been manifestly different but for the alleged error. Non-specific allegations of failure to follow regulations or failure to give due process, or any other general, non-specific allegations of error, are insufficient to satisfy the requirement of the previous sentence.

(2) *Error in binding decisions prior to final adjudication.* Prior to the time that a claim is finally adjudicated, previous decisions which are binding will be accepted as correct by the agency of original jurisdiction, with respect to the evidentiary record and law existing at the time of the decision, unless the decision is clearly erroneous, after considering whether any favorable findings may be reversed as provided in § 3.104(c).

(b) *Difference of opinion.* Whenever an adjudicative agency is of the opinion that a revision or an amendment of a previous decision is warranted on the basis of the evidentiary record and law that existed at the time of the decision, a difference of opinion being involved rather than a clear and unmistakable error, the proposed revision will be recommended to Central Office. However, a decision may be revised under § 3.2600 or § 3.2601 without being recommended to Central Office.

(c) *Character of discharge.* A determination as to character of discharge or line of duty which would result in discontinued entitlement is subject to

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the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section.

(d) *Severance of service connection.* Subject to the limitations contained in §§ 3.114 and 3.957, service connection will be severed only where evidence establishes that it is clearly and unmistakably erroneous (the burden of proof being upon the Government). (Where service connection is severed because of a change in or interpretation of a law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, the provisions of § 3.114 are for application.) A change in diagnosis may be accepted as a basis for severance action if the examining physician or physicians or other proper medical authority certifies that, in the light of all accumulated evidence, the diagnosis on which service connection was predicated is clearly erroneous. This certification must be accompanied by a summary of the facts, findings, and reasons supporting the conclusion. When severance of service connection is considered warranted, a rating proposing severance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The claimant will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that service connection should be maintained. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final rating action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued, if in order, effective the last day of the month in which a 60-day period from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the final rating action expires.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6))

(e) *Reduction in evaluation—compensation.* Where the reduction in evaluation of a service-connected disability or employability status is considered warranted and the lower evaluation would result in a reduction or discontinuance of compensation payments currently being made, a rating proposing the reduction or discontinuance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The beneficiary will be notified at his or her latest address of

record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that compensation payments should be continued at their present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final rating action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the month in which a 60-day period from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the final rating action expires.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6))

(f) *Reduction in evaluation—pension.* Where a change in disability or employability warrants a reduction or discontinuance of pension payments currently being made, a rating proposing the reduction or discontinuance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The beneficiary will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that pension benefits should be continued at their present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final rating action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the month in which the final rating action is approved.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(5))

(g) *Reduction in evaluation—monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea.* Where a reduction or discontinuance of a monetary allowance currently being paid under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 is considered warranted, VA will notify the beneficiary at his or her latest address of record of the proposed reduction, furnish detailed reasons therefor, and allow the beneficiary 60 days to present additional evidence to show that the monetary allowance should be continued at the present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this

section, if VA does not receive additional evidence within that period, it will take final rating action and reduce the award effective the last day of the month following 60 days from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the proposed reduction.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805, 1815, 1821, 1832, 5112(b)(6))

(h) *Other reductions/discontinuances.* Except as otherwise specified at § 3.103(b)(3) of this part, where a reduction or discontinuance of benefits is warranted by reason of information received concerning income, net worth, dependency, or marital or other status, a proposal for the reduction or discontinuance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The beneficiary will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that the benefits should be continued at their present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final adverse action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued effective as specified under the provisions of §§ 3.500 through 3.503 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112)

(i) *Predetermination hearings.* (1) In the advance written notice concerning proposed actions under paragraphs (d) through (h) of this section, the beneficiary will be informed that he or she will have an opportunity for a predetermination hearing, provided that a request for such a hearing is received by VA within 30 days from the date of the notice. If a timely request is received, VA will notify the beneficiary in writing of the time and place of the hearing at least 10 days in advance of the scheduled hearing date. The 10 day advance notice may be waived by agreement between VA and the beneficiary or representative. The hearing will be conducted by VA personnel who did not participate in the proposed adverse action and who will bear the decision-making responsibility. If a predetermination hearing is timely re-

quested, benefit payments shall be continued at the previously established level pending a final determination concerning the proposed action.

(2) Following the predetermination procedures specified in this paragraph and paragraph (d), (e), (f), (g) or (h) of this section, whichever is applicable, final action will be taken. If a predetermination hearing was not requested or if the beneficiary failed without good cause to report for a scheduled predetermination hearing, the final action will be based solely upon the evidence of record. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, the illness or hospitalization of the claimant or beneficiary, death of an immediate family member, etc. If a predetermination hearing was conducted, the final action will be based on evidence and testimony adduced at the hearing as well as the other evidence of record including any additional evidence obtained following the hearing pursuant to necessary development. Whether or not a predetermination hearing was conducted, a written notice of the final action shall be issued to the beneficiary and his or her representative, setting forth the reasons therefor and the evidence upon which it is based. Where a reduction or discontinuance of benefits is found warranted following consideration of any additional evidence submitted, the effective date of such reduction or discontinuance shall be as follows:

(i) Where reduction or discontinuance was proposed under the provisions of paragraph (d) or (e) of this section, the effective date of final action shall be the last day of the month in which a 60-day period from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the final action expires.

(ii) Where reduction or discontinuance was proposed under the provisions of paragraphs (f) and (g) of this section, the effective date of final action shall be the last day of the month in which such action is approved.

(iii) Where reduction or discontinuance was proposed under the provisions of paragraph (h) of this section, the effective date of final action shall be as specified under the provisions of §§ 3.500 through 3.503 of this part.

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(j) *Supplemental claims and higher-level review.* VA may revise an earlier decision denying benefits, if warranted, upon resolution of a supplemental claim under § 3.160(c) or higher-level review under § 3.2601.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112)

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates. See § 3.400. Reductions and discontinuances. See § 3.500. Protection; service connection. See § 3.957.

[26 FR 1569, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11886, Dec. 1, 1962; 39 FR 17222, May 14, 1974; 55 FR 13528, Apr. 11, 1990; 56 FR 65846, Dec. 19, 1991; 57 FR 56993, Dec. 2, 1992; 62 FR 51278, Sept. 30, 1997; 66 FR 21874, May 2, 2001; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4247, Jan. 25, 2011; 84 FR 167, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.106 Renunciation.

(a) Any person entitled to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may renounce his or her right to that benefit but may not renounce less than all of the component items which together comprise the total amount of the benefit to which the person is entitled nor any fixed monetary amounts less than the full amount of entitlement. The renunciation will be in writing over the person's signature. Upon receipt of such renunciation in the Department of Veterans Affairs, payment of such benefits and the right thereto will be terminated, and such person will be denied any and all rights thereto from such filing.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5306(a))

(b) The renunciation will not preclude the person from filing a new application for pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation at any future date. Such new application will be treated as an original application, and no payments will be made thereon for any period before the date such new application is received in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5306(b))

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section, if a new application for pension or parents' dependency and indemnity compensation

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is filed within one year after the date that the Department of Veterans Affairs receives a renunciation of that benefit, such application shall not be treated as an original application and benefits will be payable as if the renunciation had not occurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5306(c))

(d) The renunciation of dependency and indemnity compensation by one beneficiary will not serve to increase the rate payable to any other beneficiary in the same class.

(e) The renunciation of dependency and indemnity compensation by a surviving spouse will not serve to vest title to this benefit in children under the age of 18 years or to increase the rate payable to a child or children over the age of 18 years.

[26 FR 1569, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 37 FR 5384, Mar. 15, 1972; 39 FR 17222, May 14, 1974; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

§ 3.107 Awards where not all dependents apply.

Except as provided in § 3.251(a)(4), in any case where claim has not been filed by or on behalf of all dependents who may be entitled, the awards (original or amended) for those dependents who have filed claim will be made for all periods at the rates and in the same manner as though there were no other dependents. However, if the file reflects the existence of other dependents who have not filed claim and there is potential entitlement to benefits for a period prior to the date of filing claim, the award to a person who has filed claim will be made at the rate which would be payable if all dependents were receiving benefits. If at the expiration of the period allowed, claims have not been filed for such dependents, the full rate will be authorized for the first payee.

[29 FR 9564, July 15, 1964]

§ 3.108 State Department as agent of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Diplomatic and consular officers of the Department of State are authorized to act as agents of the Department of Veterans Affairs and therefore a complete claim as set forth in § 3.160(a) or

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an intent to file a claim as set forth in §3.155(b) or evidence submitted in support of a claim filed in a foreign country will be considered as filed in the Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date of receipt by the State Department representative.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence from foreign countries. See §3.202.

[26 FR 1569, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 79 FR 57695, Sept. 25, 2014]

§3.109 Time limit.

(a) *Notice of time limit for filing evidence.* (1) If a claimant's application is incomplete, the claimant will be notified of the evidence necessary to complete the application. If the evidence is not received within 1 year from the date of such notification, pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be paid by reason of that application (38 U.S.C. 5103(a)). Information concerning the whereabouts of a person who has filed claim is not considered evidence.

(2) The provisions of this paragraph are applicable to original initial applications, to applications for increased benefits by reason of increased disability, age, or the existence of a dependent, and to applications for reopening or resumption of payments. If substantiating evidence is required with respect to the veracity of a witness or the authenticity of documentary evidence timely filed, there will be allowed for the submission of such evidence 1 year from the date of the request therefor. However, any evidence to enlarge the proofs and evidence originally submitted is not so included.

(b) *Extension of time limit.* Time limits within which claimants or beneficiaries are required to act to perfect a claim or challenge an adverse VA decision may be extended for good cause shown. Where an extension is requested after expiration of a time limit, the action required of the claimant or beneficiary must be taken concurrent with or prior to the filing of a request for extension of the time limit, and good cause must be shown as to why the required action could not have been taken during the original time period and could not have been taken sooner than it was. Denials of time limit ex-

tensions are separately appealable issues.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[26 FR 1569, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 26 FR 2231, Mar. 16, 1961; 29 FR 1462, Jan. 29, 1964; 30 FR 133, Jan. 7, 1965; 55 FR 13529, Apr. 11, 1990; 79 FR 57695, Sept. 25, 2014]

§3.110 Computation of time limit.

(a) In computing the time limit for any action required of a claimant or beneficiary, including the filing of claims or evidence requested by VA, the first day of the specified period will be excluded and the last day included. This rule is applicable in cases in which the time limit expires on a workday. Where the time limit would expire on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the next succeeding workday will be included in the computation.

(b) *The first day of the specified period* referred to in paragraph (a) of this section shall be the date of mailing of notification to the claimant or beneficiary of the action required and the time limit therefor. The date of the letter of notification shall be considered the date of mailing for purposes of computing time limits. As to appeals, see §§19.52, 20.203, and 20.110 of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[55 FR 13529, Apr. 11, 1990, as amended at 58 FR 32443, June 10, 1993; 84 FR 168, Jan. 18, 2019]

§3.111 [Reserved]

§3.112 Fractions of one cent.

In all cases where the amount to be paid under any award involves a fraction of a cent, the fractional part will be excluded.

[26 FR 1570, Feb. 24, 1961]

§3.114 Change of law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue.

(a) *Effective date of award.* Where pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or child of a veteran

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with covered service in Korea is awarded or increased pursuant to a liberalizing law, or a liberalizing VA issue approved by the Secretary or by the Secretary's direction, the effective date of such award or increase shall be fixed in accordance with the facts found, but shall not be earlier than the effective date of the act or administrative issue. Where pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or child of a veteran with covered service in Korea is awarded or increased pursuant to a liberalizing law or VA issue which became effective on or after the date of its enactment or issuance, in order for a claimant to be eligible for a retroactive payment under the provisions of this paragraph the evidence must show that the claimant met all eligibility criteria for the liberalized benefit on the effective date of the liberalizing law or VA issue and that such eligibility existed continuously from that date to the date of claim or administrative determination of entitlement. The provisions of this paragraph are applicable to original and supplemental claims as well as claims for increase.

(1) If a claim is reviewed on the initiative of VA within 1 year from the effective date of the law or VA issue, or at the request of a claimant received within 1 year from that date, benefits may be authorized from the effective date of the law or VA issue.

(2) If a claim is reviewed on the initiative of VA more than 1 year after the effective date of the law or VA issue, benefits may be authorized for a period of 1 year prior to the date of administrative determination of entitlement.

(3) If a claim is reviewed at the request of the claimant more than 1 year after the effective date of the law or VA issue, benefits may be authorized for a period of 1 year prior to the date of receipt of such request.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805, 1815, 1821, 1832, 5110(g))

(b) *Discontinuance of benefits.* Where the reduction or discontinuance of an award is in order because of a change

in law or a Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or because of a change in interpretation of a law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, the payee will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence. If additional evidence is not received within that period, the award will be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the month in which the 60-day period expired.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6))

[27 FR 11886, Dec. 1, 1962, as amended at 55 FR 13529, Apr. 11, 1990; 62 FR 17706, Apr. 11, 1997; 65 FR 35282, June 2, 2000; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4247, Jan. 25, 2011; 84 FR 168, Jan. 18, 2019; 84 FR 4336, Feb. 15, 2019]

§3.115 Access to financial records.

(a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may request from a financial institution the names and addresses of its customers. Each such request, however, shall include a certification that the information is necessary for the proper administration of benefits programs under the laws administered by the Secretary, and cannot be obtained by a reasonable search of records and information of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) Information received pursuant to a request referred to in paragraph (a) of this section shall not be used for any purpose other than the administration of benefits programs under the laws administered by the Secretary if the disclosure of that information would otherwise be prohibited by any provision of the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3401 through 3422).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5319)

[58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993]

CLAIMS

§3.150 Forms to be furnished.

(a) Upon request made in person or in writing by any person applying for benefits under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the appropriate application form will be furnished.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5102)

(b) Upon receipt of notice of death of a veteran, the appropriate application form will be forwarded for execution by or on behalf of any dependent who has apparent entitlement to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation. If it is not indicated that any person would be entitled to such benefits, but there is payable an accrued benefit not paid during the veteran's lifetime, the appropriate application form will be forwarded to the preferred dependent. Notice of the time limit will be included in letters forwarding applications for benefits.

CROSS REFERENCE: Extension of time limit. See § 3.109(b).

[26 FR 1570, Feb. 14, 1961, as amended at 30 FR 133, Jan. 7, 1965; 79 FR 57695, Sept. 25, 2014]

§ 3.151 Claims for disability benefits.

(a) *General.* A specific claim in the form prescribed by the Secretary must be filed in order for benefits to be paid to any individual under the laws administered by VA. (38 U.S.C. 5101(a)). A claim by a veteran for compensation may be considered to be a claim for pension; and a claim by a veteran for pension may be considered to be a claim for compensation. The greater benefit will be awarded, unless the claimant specifically elects the lesser benefit. (See scope of claim, § 3.155(d)(2); complete claim, § 3.160(a); supplemental claims, § 3.2501(b)).

(b) *Retroactive disability pension claims.* Where disability pension entitlement is established based on a claim received by VA on or after October 1, 1984, the pension award may not be effective prior to the date of receipt of the pension claim unless the veteran specifically claims entitlement to retroactive benefits. The claim for retroactivity may be filed separately or included in the claim for disability pension, but it must be received by VA within one year from the date on which the veteran became permanently and totally disabled. Additional requirements for entitlement to a retroactive pension award are contained in § 3.400(b) of this part.

(c) *Issues within a claim.* (1) To the extent that a complete claim application encompasses a request for more than one determination of entitlement, each

specific entitlement will be adjudicated and is considered a separate issue for purposes of the review options prescribed in § 3.2500. A single decision by an agency of original jurisdiction may adjudicate multiple issues in this respect, whether expressly claimed or determined by VA to be reasonably within the scope of the application as prescribed in § 3.155(d)(2). VA will issue a decision that addresses each such identified issue within a claim. Upon receipt of notice of a decision, a claimant may elect any of the applicable review options prescribed in § 3.2500 for each issue adjudicated.

(2) With respect to service-connected disability compensation, an issue for purposes of paragraph (c)(1) of this section is defined as entitlement to compensation for a particular disability. For example, if a decision adjudicates service-connected disability compensation for both a knee condition and an ankle condition, compensation for each condition is a separate entitlement or issue for which a different review option may be elected. However, different review options may not be selected for specific components of the knee disability claim, such as ancillary benefits, whether a knee injury occurred in service, or whether a current knee condition resulted from a service-connected injury or condition.

(d) *Evidentiary record.* The evidentiary record before the agency of original jurisdiction for an initial or supplemental claim includes all evidence received by VA before VA issues notice of a decision on the claim. Once the agency of original jurisdiction issues notice of a decision on a claim, the evidentiary record closes as described in § 3.103(c)(2) and VA no longer has a duty to assist in gathering evidence under § 3.159. (See § 3.155(b), submission of evidence).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C 5110(b)(3))

CROSS REFERENCE: Intent to file a claim. See § 3.155(b).

[50 FR 25981, June 24, 1985, as amended at 79 FR 57695, Sept. 25, 2014; 84 FR 168, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.152 Claims for death benefits.

(a) A specific claim in the form prescribed by the Secretary (or jointly

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with the Commissioner of Social Security, as prescribed by § 3.153) must be filed in order for death benefits to be paid to any individual under the laws administered by VA. (See § 3.400(c) concerning effective dates of awards.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101(a))

(b)(1) A claim by a surviving spouse or child for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation will also be considered to be a claim for death pension and accrued benefits, and a claim by a surviving spouse or child for death pension will be considered to be a claim for death compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation and accrued benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101(b)(1))

(2) A claim by a parent for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation will also be considered to be a claim for accrued benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101(b)(2))

(c)(1) Where a child's entitlement to dependency and indemnity compensation arises by reason of termination of a surviving spouse's right to dependency and indemnity compensation or by reason of attaining the age of 18 years, a claim will be required. (38 U.S.C. 5110(e).) (See paragraph (c)(4) of this section.) Where the award to the surviving spouse is terminated by reason of her or his death, a claim for the child will be considered a claim for any accrued benefits which may be payable.

(2) A claim filed by a surviving spouse who does not have entitlement will be accepted as a claim for a child or children in her or his custody named in the claim.

(3) Where a claim of a surviving spouse is disallowed for any reason whatsoever and where evidence requested in order to determine entitlement from a child or children named in the surviving spouse's claim is submitted within 1 year from the date of request, requested either before or after disallowance of the surviving spouse's claim, an award for the child or children will be made as though the disallowed claim had been filed solely on their behalf. Otherwise, payments may not be made for the child or chil-

dren for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

(4) Where payments of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation to a surviving spouse have been discontinued because of remarriage or death, or a child becomes eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation by reason of attaining the age of 18 years, and any necessary evidence is submitted within 1 year from date of request, an award for the child or children named in the surviving spouse's claim will be made on the basis of the surviving spouse's claim having been converted to a claim on behalf of the child. Otherwise, payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: State Department as agent of Department of Veterans Affairs. See § 3.108. Change in status of dependents. See § 3.651.

[50 FR 25981, June 24, 1985, as amended at 71 FR 44918, Aug. 8, 2006]

§ 3.153 Claims filed with Social Security.

An application on a form jointly prescribed by the Secretary and the Commissioner of Social Security filed with the Social Security Administration on or after January 1, 1957, will be considered a claim for death benefits, and to have been received in the Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date of receipt in Social Security Administration. The receipt of such an application (or copy thereof) by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not preclude a request for any necessary evidence.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5105)

[26 FR 1570, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 71 FR 44918, Aug. 8, 2006]

§ 3.154 Injury due to hospital treatment, etc.

Claimants must file a complete claim on the appropriate application form prescribed by the Secretary when applying for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 and 38 CFR 3.361. See §§ 3.151, 3.160(a), and 3.400(i) concerning effective dates

of awards; see § 3.155(b) regarding intent to file the appropriate application form.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 and 1151.)

CROSS REFERENCE: Effective Dates. See § 3.400(i). Disability or death due to hospitalization, etc. See §§ 3.358, 3.361 and 3.800.

[79 FR 57695, Sept. 25, 2014]

§ 3.155 How to file a claim.

The following paragraphs describe the manner and methods in which a claim can be initiated and filed. The provisions of this section are applicable to all claims governed by part 3, with the exception that paragraph (b) of this section, regarding intent to file a claim, does not apply to supplemental claims.

(a) *Request for an application for benefits.* A claimant, his or her duly authorized representative, a Member of Congress, or some person acting as next friend of a claimant who is not of full age or capacity, who indicates a desire to file for benefits under the laws administered by VA, by a communication or action, to include an electronic mail that is transmitted through VA's electronic portal or otherwise, that does not meet the standards of a complete claim is considered a request for an application form for benefits under § 3.150(a). Upon receipt of such a communication or action, the Secretary shall notify the claimant and the claimant's representative, if any, of the information necessary to complete the application form or form prescribed by the Secretary.

(b) *Intent to file a claim.* A claimant, his or her duly authorized representative, a Member of Congress, or some person acting as next friend of claimant who is not of full age or capacity may indicate a claimant's desire to file a claim for benefits by submitting an intent to file a claim to VA. An intent to file a claim must provide sufficient identifiable or biographical information to identify the claimant. Upon receipt of the intent to file a claim, VA will furnish the claimant with the appropriate application form prescribed by the Secretary. If VA receives a complete application form prescribed by the Secretary, as defined in paragraph (a) of § 3.160, appropriate to the benefit

sought within 1 year of receipt of the intent to file a claim, VA will consider the complete claim filed as of the date the intent to file a claim was received.

(1) An intent to file a claim can be submitted in one of the following three ways:

(i) *Saved electronic application.* When an application otherwise meeting the requirements of this paragraph (b) is electronically initiated and saved in a claims-submission tool within a VA web-based electronic claims application system prior to filing of a complete claim, VA will consider that application to be an intent to file a claim.

(ii) *Written intent on prescribed intent to file a claim form.* The submission to an agency of original jurisdiction of a signed and dated intent to file a claim, on the form prescribed by the Secretary for that purpose, will be accepted as an intent to file a claim.

(iii) *Oral intent communicated to designated VA personnel and recorded in writing.* An oral statement of intent to file a claim will be accepted if it is directed to a VA employee designated to receive such a communication, the VA employee receiving this information follows the provisions set forth in § 3.217(b), and the VA employee documents the date VA received the claimant's intent to file a claim in the claimant's records.

(2) An intent to file a claim must identify the general benefit (e.g., compensation, pension), but need not identify the specific benefit claimed or any medical condition(s) on which the claim is based. To the extent a claimant provides this or other extraneous information on the designated form referenced in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section that the form does not solicit, the provision of such information is of no effect other than that it is added to the file for appropriate consideration as evidence in support of a complete claim if filed. In particular, if a claimant identifies specific medical condition(s) on which the claim is based in an intent to file a claim, this extraneous information does not convert the intent to file a claim into a complete claim or a substantially complete application. Extraneous information provided in an oral communication under

paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section is of no effect and generally will not be recorded in the record of the claimant's intent to file.

(3) Upon receipt of an intent to file a claim, the Secretary shall notify the claimant and the claimant's representative, if any, of the information necessary to complete the appropriate application form prescribed by the Secretary.

(4) If an intent to file a claim is not submitted in the form required by paragraph (b)(1) of this section or a complete claim is not filed within 1 year of the receipt of the intent to file a claim, VA will not take further action unless a new claim or a new intent to file a claim is received.

(5) An intent to file a claim received from a service organization, an attorney, or agent indicating a represented claimant's intent to file a claim may not be accepted if a power of attorney was not executed at the time the communication was written. VA will only accept an oral intent to file from a service organization, an attorney, or agent if a power of attorney is of record at the time the oral communication is received by the designated VA employee.

(6) VA will not recognize more than one intent to file concurrently for the same benefit (e.g., compensation, pension). If an intent to file has not been followed by a complete claim, a subsequent intent to file regarding the same benefit received within 1 year of the prior intent to file will have no effect. If, however, VA receives an intent to file followed by a complete claim and later another intent to file for the same benefit is submitted within 1 year of the previous intent to file, VA will recognize the subsequent intent to file to establish an effective date for any award granted for the next complete claim, provided it is received within 1 year of the subsequent intent to file.

(c) *Incomplete application form.* Upon receipt of a communication indicating a belief in entitlement to benefits that is submitted on a paper application form prescribed by the Secretary that is not complete as defined in § 3.160(a) of this section, the Secretary shall notify the claimant and the claimant's representative, if any, of the informa-

tion necessary to complete the application form prescribed by the Secretary. If a complete claim is submitted within 1 year of receipt of such incomplete application form prescribed by the Secretary, VA will consider it as filed as of the date VA received the incomplete application form prescribed by the Secretary that did not meet the standards of a complete claim. See § 3.160(a) for Complete Claim.

(d) *Claims.*—(1) *Requirement for complete claim and date of claim.* A complete claim is required for all types of claims, and will generally be considered filed as of the date it was received by VA for an evaluation or award of benefits under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(i) *Supplemental claims.* Upon receipt of a communication indicating a belief in entitlement to benefits that is submitted in writing or electronically on a supplemental claim form prescribed by the Secretary that is not complete as defined in § 3.160(a) of this section, the Secretary shall notify the claimant and the claimant's representative, if any, of the information necessary to complete the application form prescribed by the Secretary. If VA receives a complete claim within 60 days of notice by VA that an incomplete claim was filed, it will be considered filed as of the date of receipt of the incomplete claim (see § 3.2501).

(ii) *For other types of claims.* If VA receives a complete claim within 1 year of the filing of an intent to file a claim that meets the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section, it will be considered filed as of the date of receipt of the intent to file a claim. Only one complete claim for a benefit (e.g., compensation, pension) may be associated with each intent to file a claim for that benefit, though multiple issues may be contained within a complete claim. In the event multiple complete claims for a benefit are filed within 1 year of an intent to file a claim for that benefit, only the first claim filed will be associated with the intent to file a claim. In the event that VA receives both an intent to file a claim and an incomplete application form before the complete claim as defined in § 3.160(a) is filed, the complete claim will be considered filed as of the date of receipt of whichever

was filed first provided it is perfected within the necessary timeframe, but in no event, will the complete claim be considered filed more than one year prior to the date of receipt of the complete claim.

(2) *Scope of claim.* Once VA receives a complete claim, VA will adjudicate as part of the claim entitlement to any ancillary benefits that arise as a result of the adjudication decision (e.g., entitlement to 38 U.S.C. Chapter 35 Dependents' Educational Assistance benefits, entitlement to special monthly compensation under 38 CFR 3.350, entitlement to adaptive automobile allowance, etc.). The claimant may, but need not, assert entitlement to ancillary benefits at the time the complete claim is filed. VA will also consider all lay and medical evidence of record in order to adjudicate entitlement to benefits for the claimed condition as well as entitlement to any additional benefits for complications of the claimed condition, including those identified by the rating criteria for that condition in 38 CFR Part 4, VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities. VA's decision on an issue within a claim implies that VA has determined that evidence of record does not support entitlement for any other issues that are reasonably within the scope of the issues addressed in that decision. VA's decision that addresses all outstanding issues enumerated in the complete claim implies that VA has determined evidence of record does not support entitlement for any other issues that are reasonably within the scope of the issues enumerated in the complete claim.

CROSS REFERENCE: Complete claim. See § 3.160(a). Effective dates. See § 3.400.

[79 FR 57695, Sept. 25, 2014, as amended at 84 FR 168, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.156 New evidence.

New evidence is evidence not previously part of the actual record before agency adjudicators.

(a) *New and material evidence.* For claims to reopen decided prior to the effective date provided in § 19.2(a), the following standards apply. A claimant may reopen a finally adjudicated legacy claim by submitting new and material evidence. New evidence is evidence not previously part of the actual record

before agency adjudicators. Material evidence means existing evidence that, by itself or when considered with previous evidence of record, relates to an unestablished fact necessary to substantiate the claim. New and material evidence can be neither cumulative nor redundant of the evidence of record at the time of the last prior final denial of the claim sought to be reopened, and must raise a reasonable possibility of substantiating the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5103A(f), 5108)

(b) *Pending legacy claims not under the modernized review system.* New and material evidence received prior to the expiration of the appeal period, or prior to the appellate decision if a timely appeal has been filed (including evidence received prior to an appellate decision and referred to the agency of original jurisdiction by the Board of Veterans Appeals without consideration in that decision in accordance with the provisions of § 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter), will be considered as having been filed in connection with the claim which was pending at the beginning of the appeal period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(c) *Service department records.* (1) Notwithstanding any other section in this part, at any time after VA issues a decision on a claim, if VA receives or associates with the claims file relevant official service department records that existed and had not been associated with the claims file when VA first decided the claim, VA will reconsider the claim, notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this section. Such records include, but are not limited to:

(i) Service records that are related to a claimed in-service event, injury, or disease, regardless of whether such records mention the veteran by name, as long as the other requirements of paragraph (c) of this section are met;

(ii) Additional service records forwarded by the Department of Defense or the service department to VA any time after VA's original request for service records; and

(iii) Declassified records that could not have been obtained because the records were classified when VA decided the claim.

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(2) Paragraph (c)(1) of this section does not apply to records that VA could not have obtained when it decided the claim because the records did not exist when VA decided the claim, or because the claimant failed to provide sufficient information for VA to identify and obtain the records from the respective service department or from any other official source.

(3) An award made based all or in part on the records identified by paragraph (c)(1) of this section is effective on the date entitlement arose or the date VA received the previously decided claim, whichever is later, or such other date as may be authorized by the provisions of this part applicable to the previously decided claim.

(4) A retroactive evaluation of disability resulting from disease or injury subsequently service connected on the basis of the new evidence from the service department must be supported adequately by medical evidence. Where such records clearly support the assignment of a specific rating over a part or the entire period of time involved, a retroactive evaluation will be assigned accordingly, except as it may be affected by the filing date of the original claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(d) *New and relevant evidence.* On or after the effective date provided in § 19.2(a), a claimant may file a supplemental claim as prescribed in § 3.2501. If new and relevant evidence, as defined in § 3.2501(a)(1), is presented or secured with respect to the supplemental claim, the agency of original jurisdiction will readjudicate the claim taking into consideration all of the evidence of record.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates—general. See § 3.400. Correction of military records. See § 3.400(g).

[27 FR 11887, Dec. 1, 1962, as amended at 55 FR 20148, May 15, 1990; 55 FR 52275, Dec. 21, 1990; 58 FR 32443, June 10, 1993; 66 FR 45630, Aug. 29, 2001; 71 FR 52457, Sept. 6, 2006; 84 FR 169, Jan. 18, 2019; 84 FR 4336, Feb. 15, 2019; 86 FR 15414, Mar. 23, 2021]

§ 3.158 Abandoned claims.

(a) *General.* Except as provided in § 3.652, where evidence requested in connection with an initial claim or supple-

mental claim or for the purpose of determining continued entitlement is not furnished within 1 year after the date of request, the claim will be considered abandoned. After the expiration of 1 year, further action will not be taken unless a new claim is received. Should the right to benefits be finally established, pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or monetary allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 based on such evidence shall commence not earlier than the date of filing the new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(b) *Department of Veterans Affairs examinations.* Where the veteran fails without adequate reason to respond to an order to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination within 1 year from the date of request and payments have been discontinued, the claim for such benefits will be considered abandoned.

(c) *Disappearance.* Where payments of pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or monetary allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 have not been made or have been discontinued because a payee's present whereabouts is unknown, payments will be resumed effective the day following the date of last payment if entitlement is otherwise established, upon receipt of a valid current address.

CROSS REFERENCES: Periodic certification of continued eligibility. See § 3.652. Failure to report for VA examination. See § 3.655. Disappearance of veteran. See § 3.656.

[27 FR 11887, Dec. 1, 1962, as amended at 28 FR 13362, Dec. 10, 1963; 52 FR 43063, Nov. 9, 1987; 62 FR 51278, Sept. 30, 1997; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 84 FR 169, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.159 Department of Veterans Affairs assistance in developing claims.

(a) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) *Competent medical evidence* means evidence provided by a person who is qualified through education, training, or experience to offer medical diagnoses, statements, or opinions. Competent medical evidence may also mean statements conveying sound

medical principles found in medical treatises. It would also include statements contained in authoritative writings such as medical and scientific articles and research reports or analyses.

(2) *Competent lay evidence* means any evidence not requiring that the proponent have specialized education, training, or experience. Lay evidence is competent if it is provided by a person who has knowledge of facts or circumstances and conveys matters that can be observed and described by a lay person.

(3) *Substantially complete application* means an application containing:

- (i) The claimant's name;
- (ii) His or her relationship to the veteran, if applicable;
- (iii) Sufficient service information for VA to verify the claimed service, if applicable;
- (iv) The benefit sought and any medical condition(s) on which it is based;
- (v) The claimant's signature; and
- (vi) In claims for nonservice-connected disability or death pension and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation, a statement of income;
- (vii) In supplemental claims, identification or inclusion of potentially new evidence (see §3.2501);
- (viii) For higher-level reviews, identification of the date of the decision for which review is sought.

(4) For purposes of paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section, *event* means one or more incidents associated with places, types, and circumstances of service giving rise to disability.

(5) *Information* means non-evidentiary facts, such as the claimant's Social Security number or address; the name and military unit of a person who served with the veteran; or the name and address of a medical care provider who may have evidence pertinent to the claim.

(b) *VA's duty to notify claimants of necessary information or evidence.* (1) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this section, when VA receives a complete or substantially complete initial or supplemental claim, VA will notify the claimant of any information and medical or lay evidence that is necessary to substantiate the claim (hereafter in this paragraph referred to as the "no-

tice") In the notice, VA will inform the claimant which information and evidence, if any, that the claimant is to provide to VA and which information and evidence, if any, that VA will attempt to obtain on behalf of the claimant. The information and evidence that the claimant is informed that the claimant is to provide must be provided within one year of the date of the notice. If the claimant has not responded to the notice within 30 days, VA may decide the claim prior to the expiration of the one-year period based on all the information and evidence contained in the file, including information and evidence it has obtained on behalf of the claimant and any VA medical examinations or medical opinions. If VA does so, however, and the claimant subsequently provides the information and evidence within one year of the date of the notice in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (b)(4) of this section, VA must readjudicate the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103)

(2) If VA receives an incomplete application for benefits, it will notify the claimant of the information necessary to complete the application and will defer assistance until the claimant submits this information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5102(b), 5103A(3))

(3) No duty to provide the notice described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section arises:

- (i) Upon receipt of a supplemental claim under §3.2501 within one year of the date VA issues notice of a prior decision;
- (ii) Upon receipt of a request for higher-level review under §3.2601;
- (iii) Upon receipt of a Notice of Disagreement under §20.202 of this chapter; or
- (iv) When, as a matter of law, entitlement to the benefit claimed cannot be established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103(a), 5103A(a)(2))

(4) After VA has issued a notice of decision, submission of information and evidence substantiating a claim must be accomplished through the proper filing of a review option in accordance

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with § 3.2500 on a form prescribed by the Secretary. New and relevant evidence may be submitted in connection with either the filing of a supplemental claim under § 3.2501 or the filing of a Notice of Disagreement with the Board under 38 CFR 20.202, on forms prescribed by the Secretary, and election of a Board docket that permits the filing of new evidence (see 38 CFR 20.302 and 20.303).

(c) *VA's duty to assist claimants in obtaining evidence.* VA has a duty to assist claimants in obtaining evidence to substantiate all substantially complete initial and supplemental claims, and when a claim is returned for readjudication by a higher-level adjudicator or the Board after identification of a duty to assist error on the part of the agency of original jurisdiction, until the time VA issues notice of a decision on a claim or returned claim. VA will make reasonable efforts to help a claimant obtain evidence necessary to substantiate the claim. VA will not pay any fees charged by a custodian to provide records requested. When a claim is returned for readjudication by a higher-level adjudicator or the Board after identification of a duty to assist error, the agency of original jurisdiction has a duty to correct any other duty to assist errors not identified by the higher-level adjudicator or the Board.

(1) *Obtaining records not in the custody of a Federal department or agency.* VA will make reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records not in the custody of a Federal department or agency, to include records from State or local governments, private medical care providers, current or former employers, and other non-Federal governmental sources. Such reasonable efforts will generally consist of an initial request for the records and, if the records are not received, at least one follow-up request. A follow-up request is not required if a response to the initial request indicates that the records sought do not exist or that a follow-up request for the records would be futile. If VA receives information showing that subsequent requests to this or another custodian could result in obtaining the records sought, then reasonable efforts will include an initial request and, if

the records are not received, at least one follow-up request to the new source or an additional request to the original source.

(i) The claimant must cooperate fully with VA's reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records from non-Federal agency or department custodians. The claimant must provide enough information to identify and locate the existing records, including the person, company, agency, or other custodian holding the records; the approximate time frame covered by the records; and, in the case of medical treatment records, the condition for which treatment was provided.

(ii) If necessary, the claimant must authorize the release of existing records in a form acceptable to the person, company, agency, or other custodian holding the records.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(b))

(2) *Obtaining records in the custody of a Federal department or agency.* VA will make as many requests as are necessary to obtain relevant records from a Federal department or agency. These records include but are not limited to military records, including service medical records; medical and other records from VA medical facilities; records from non-VA facilities providing examination or treatment at VA expense; and records from other Federal agencies, such as the Social Security Administration. VA will end its efforts to obtain records from a Federal department or agency only if VA concludes that the records sought do not exist or that further efforts to obtain those records would be futile. Cases in which VA may conclude that no further efforts are required include those in which the Federal department or agency advises VA that the requested records do not exist or the custodian does not have them.

(i) The claimant must cooperate fully with VA's reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records from Federal agency or department custodians. If requested by VA, the claimant must provide enough information to identify and locate the existing records, including the custodian or agency holding the records; the approximate time frame covered by the records; and, in the case

of medical treatment records, the condition for which treatment was provided. In the case of records requested to corroborate a claimed stressful event in service, the claimant must provide information sufficient for the records custodian to conduct a search of the corroborative records.

(ii) If necessary, the claimant must authorize the release of existing records in a form acceptable to the custodian or agency holding the records.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(b))

(3) *Obtaining records in compensation claims.* In a claim for disability compensation, VA will make efforts to obtain the claimant's service medical records, if relevant to the claim; other relevant records pertaining to the claimant's active military, naval or air service that are held or maintained by a governmental entity; VA medical records or records of examination or treatment at non-VA facilities authorized by VA; and any other relevant records held by any Federal department or agency. The claimant must provide enough information to identify and locate the existing records including the custodian or agency holding the records; the approximate time frame covered by the records; and, in the case of medical treatment records, the condition for which treatment was provided.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(c))

(4) *Providing medical examinations or obtaining medical opinions.* (i) In a claim for disability compensation, VA will provide a medical examination or obtain a medical opinion based upon a review of the evidence of record if VA determines it is necessary to decide the claim. A medical examination or medical opinion is necessary if the information and evidence of record does not contain sufficient competent medical evidence to decide the claim, but:

(A) Contains competent lay or medical evidence of a current diagnosed disability or persistent or recurrent symptoms of disability;

(B) Establishes that the veteran suffered an event, injury or disease in service, or has a disease or symptoms of a disease listed in §3.309, §3.313, §3.316, and §3.317 manifesting during an

applicable presumptive period provided the claimant has the required service or triggering event to qualify for that presumption; and

(C) Indicates that the claimed disability or symptoms may be associated with the established event, injury, or disease in service or with another service-connected disability.

(ii) Paragraph (4)(i)(C) could be satisfied by competent evidence showing post-service treatment for a condition, or other possible association with military service.

(iii) For requests to reopen a finally adjudicated claim received prior to the effective date provided in §19.2(a) of this chapter, this paragraph (c)(4) applies only if new and material evidence is presented or secured as prescribed in §3.156.

(iv) This paragraph (c)(4) applies to a supplemental claim only if new and relevant evidence under §3.2501 is presented or secured.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(d))

(d) *Circumstances where VA will refrain from or discontinue providing assistance.* VA will refrain from providing assistance in obtaining evidence for an initial or supplemental claim if the substantially complete application for benefits indicates that there is no reasonable possibility that any assistance VA would provide to the claimant would substantiate the claim. VA will discontinue providing assistance in obtaining evidence for a claim if the evidence obtained indicates that there is no reasonable possibility that further assistance would substantiate the claim. Circumstances in which VA will refrain from or discontinue providing assistance in obtaining evidence include, but are not limited to:

(1) The claimant's ineligibility for the benefit sought because of lack of qualifying service, lack of veteran status, or other lack of legal eligibility;

(2) Claims that are inherently incredible or clearly lack merit; and

(3) An application requesting a benefit to which the claimant is not entitled as a matter of law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(a)(2))

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(e) *Duty to notify claimant of inability to obtain records.* (1) If VA makes reasonable efforts to obtain relevant non-Federal records but is unable to obtain them, or after continued efforts to obtain Federal records concludes that it is reasonably certain they do not exist or further efforts to obtain them would be futile, VA will provide the claimant with oral or written notice of that fact. VA will make a record of any oral notice conveyed to the claimant. For non-Federal records requests, VA may provide the notice at the same time it makes its final attempt to obtain the relevant records. In either case, the notice must contain the following information:

(i) The identity of the records VA was unable to obtain;

(ii) An explanation of the efforts VA made to obtain the records;

(iii) A description of any further action VA will take regarding the claim, including, but not limited to, notice that VA will decide the claim based on the evidence of record unless the claimant submits the records VA was unable to obtain; and

(iv) A notice that the claimant is ultimately responsible for providing the evidence.

(2) If VA becomes aware of the existence of relevant records before deciding the claim, VA will notify the claimant of the records and request that the claimant provide a release for the records. If the claimant does not provide any necessary release of the relevant records that VA is unable to obtain, VA will request that the claimant obtain the records and provide them to VA.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(b)(2))

(f) For the purpose of the notice requirements in paragraphs (b) and (e) of this section, notice to the claimant means notice to the claimant or his or her fiduciary, if any, as well as to his or her representative, if any.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5102(b), 5103(a))

(g) The authority recognized in subsection (g) of 38 U.S.C. 5103A is reserved to the sole discretion of the Secretary and will be implemented, when deemed

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appropriate by the Secretary, through the promulgation of regulations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(g))

[66 FR 45630, Aug. 29, 2001, as amended at 73 FR 23356, Apr. 30, 2008; 84 FR 169, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.160 Status of claims.

(a) *Complete claim.* A submission of an application form prescribed by the Secretary, whether paper or electronic, that meets the following requirements:

(1) A complete claim must provide the name of the claimant; the relationship to the veteran, if applicable; and sufficient information for VA to verify the claimed service, if applicable.

(2) A complete claim must be signed by the claimant or a person legally authorized to sign for the claimant.

(3) A complete claim must identify the benefit sought.

(4) A description of any symptom(s) or medical condition(s) on which the benefit is based must be provided to the extent the form prescribed by the Secretary so requires.

(5) For nonservice-connected disability or death pension and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation claims, a statement of income must be provided to the extent the form prescribed by the Secretary so requires; and

(6) For supplemental claims, potentially new evidence must be identified or included.

(b) *Original claim.* The initial complete claim for one or more benefits on an application form prescribed by the Secretary.

(c) *Pending claim.* A claim which has not been finally adjudicated.

(d) *Finally adjudicated claim.* A claim that is adjudicated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as either allowed or disallowed is considered finally adjudicated when:

(1) For legacy claims not subject to the modernized review system, whichever of the following occurs first:

(i) The expiration of the period in which to file a Notice of Disagreement, pursuant to the provisions of § 19.52(a) or § 20.502(a) of this chapter, as applicable; or

(ii) Disposition on appellate review.

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(2) For claims under the modernized review system, the expiration of the period in which to file a review option available under § 3.2500 or disposition on judicial review where no such review option is available.

(e) *Reopened claims prior to effective date of modernized review system.* An application for a benefit received prior to the effective date provided in § 19.2(a) of this chapter, after final disallowance of an earlier claim that is subject to readjudication on the merits based on receipt of new and material evidence related to the finally adjudicated claim, or any claim based on additional evidence or a request for a personal hearing submitted more than 90 days following notification to the appellant of the certification of an appeal and transfer of applicable records to the Board of Veterans' Appeals which was not considered by the Board in its decision and was referred to the agency of original jurisdiction for consideration as provided in § 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter. As of the effective date provided in § 19.2(a) of this chapter, claimants may no longer file to reopen a claim, but may file a supplemental claim as prescribed in § 3.2501 to apply for a previously disallowed benefit. A request to reopen a finally decided claim that has not been adjudicated as of the effective date will be processed as a supplemental claim subject to the modernized review system.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[27 FR 11887, Dec. 1, 1962, as amended at 31 FR 12056, Sept. 15, 1966; 55 FR 20148, May 15, 1990; 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993; 79 FR 57696, Sept. 25, 2014; 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.161 [Reserved]

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

§ 3.200 Testimony certified or under oath.

(a) All oral testimony presented by claimants and witnesses on their behalf before any rating or authorization body will be under oath or affirmation. (See § 3.103(c).)

(b) All written testimony submitted by the claimant or in his or her behalf for the purpose of establishing a claim for service connection will be certified

or under oath or affirmation. This includes records, examination reports, and transcripts material to the issue received by the Department of Veterans Affairs at the instance of the claimant or in his or her behalf or requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs from State, county, municipal, recognized private institutions, and contract hospitals.

[40 FR 36329, Aug. 20, 1975]

§ 3.201 Exchange of evidence; Social Security and Department of Veterans Affairs.

(a) A claimant for dependency and indemnity compensation may elect to furnish to the Department of Veterans Affairs in support of that claim copies of evidence which was previously furnished to the Social Security Administration or to have the Department of Veterans Affairs obtain such evidence from the Social Security Administration. For the purpose of determining the earliest effective date for payment of dependency and indemnity compensation, such evidence will be deemed to have been received by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the date it was received by the Social Security Administration.

(b) A copy or certification of evidence filed in the Department of Veterans Affairs in support of a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation will be furnished the Social Security Administration upon request from the agency.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a) and 5105)

CROSS REFERENCE: Claims filed with Social Security. See § 3.153.

[26 FR 1571, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 58 FR 25562, Apr. 27, 1993]

§ 3.202 Evidence from foreign countries.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, where an affidavit or other document is required to be executed under oath before an official in a foreign country, the signature of that official must be authenticated by a United States Consular Officer in that jurisdiction or by the State Department. Where the United States has no consular representative in a foreign

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country, such authentication may be made as follows:

(1) By a consular agent of a friendly government whereupon the signature and seal of the official of the friendly government may be authenticated by the State Department; or

(2) By the nearest American consul who will attach a certificate showing the result of the investigation concerning its authenticity.

(b) Authentication will not be required: (1) On documents approved by the Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, Ottawa, Canada: or

(2) When it is indicated that the attesting officer is authorized to administer oaths for general purposes and the document bears his or her signature and seal; or

(3) When the document is executed before a Department of Veterans Affairs employee authorized to administer oaths; or

(4) When a copy of a public or church record from any foreign country purports to establish birth, adoption, marriage, annulment, divorce, or death, provided it bears the signature and seal of the custodian of such record and there is no conflicting evidence in the file which would serve to create doubt as to the correctness of the record; or

(5) When a copy of the public or church record from one of the countries comprising the United Kingdom, namely: England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, purports to establish birth, marriage, or death, provided it bears the signature or seal or stamp of the custodian of such record and there is no evidence which would serve to create doubt as to the correctness of the records; or

(6) When affidavits prepared in the Republic of the Philippines are certified by a Department of Veterans Affairs representative located in the Philippines having authority to administer oaths.

(c) Photocopies of original documents meeting the requirements of this section will be accepted if they satisfy the requirements of § 3.204 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

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CROSS REFERENCE: State Department as agent of Department of Veterans Affairs. See § 3.108.

[26 FR 1571, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 40 FR 36329, Aug. 20, 1975; 52 FR 19348, May 22, 1987; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994]

§ 3.203 Service records as evidence of service and character of discharge.

(a) *Evidence submitted by a claimant.* For the purpose of establishing entitlement to pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation or burial benefits the Department of Veterans Affairs may accept evidence of service submitted by a claimant (or sent directly to the Department of Veterans Affairs by the service department), such as a DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or original Certificate of Discharge, without verification from the appropriate service department if the evidence meets the following conditions:

(1) The evidence is a document issued by the service department. A copy of an original document is acceptable if the copy was issued by the service department or if the copy was issued by a public custodian of records who certifies that it is a true and exact copy of the document in the custodian's custody or, if the copy was submitted by an accredited agent, attorney or service organization representative who has successfully completed VA-prescribed training on military records, and who certifies that it is a true and exact copy of either an original document or of a copy issued by the service department or a public custodian of records; and

(2) The document contains needed information as to length, time and character of service; and

(3) In the opinion of the Department of Veterans Affairs the document is genuine and the information contained in it is accurate.

(b) *Additional requirements for pension claimants.* In addition to meeting the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section, a document submitted to establish a creditable period of wartime service for pension entitlement may be accepted without verification if the document (or other evidence of record) shows:

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- (1) Service of 4 months or more; or
- (2) Discharge for disability incurred in line of duty; or
- (3) Ninety days creditable service based on records from the service department such as hospitalization for 90 days for a line of duty disability.

(c) *Verification from the service department.* When the claimant does not submit evidence of service or the evidence submitted does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section (and paragraph (b) of this section in pension claims), the Department of Veterans Affairs shall request verification of service from the service department. However, payment of non-service-connected burial benefits may be authorized, if otherwise in order, based upon evidence of service which VA relied upon to authorize payment of compensation or pension during the veteran's lifetime, provided that there is no evidence which would serve to create doubt as to the correctness of that service evidence. If it appears that a length of service requirement may not be met (e.g., the 90 days wartime service requirement to receive pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521(j)), the Department of Veterans Affairs shall request a complete statement of service to determine if there are any periods of active service that are required to be excluded under § 3.15.

[45 FR 72654, Nov. 3, 1980, as amended at 46 FR 51246, Oct. 19, 1981; 58 FR 37857, July 14, 1993; 58 FR 42623, Aug. 10, 1993; 66 FR 19858, Apr. 18, 2001]

§ 3.204 Evidence of dependents and age.

(a)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, VA will accept, for the purpose of determining entitlement to benefits under laws administered by VA, the statement of a claimant as proof of marriage, dissolution of a marriage, birth of a child, or death of a dependent, provided that the statement contains: the date (month and year) and place of the event; the full name and relationship of the other person to the claimant; and, where the claimant's dependent child does not reside with the claimant, the name and address of the person who has custody of the child. In addition, a claimant must provide the social security num-

ber of any dependent on whose behalf he or she is seeking benefits (see § 3.216).

(2) VA shall require the types of evidence indicated in §§ 3.205 through 3.211 where: the claimant does not reside within a state; the claimant's statement on its face raises a question of its validity; the claimant's statement conflicts with other evidence of record; or, there is a reasonable indication, in the claimant's statement or otherwise, of fraud or misrepresentation of the relationship in question.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5124)

(b) *Marriage or birth.* The classes of evidence to be furnished for the purpose of establishing marriage, dissolution of marriage, age, relationship, or death, if required under the provisions of paragraph (a)(2), are indicated in §§ 3.205 through 3.211 in the order of preference. Failure to furnish the higher class, however, does not preclude the acceptance of a lower class if the evidence furnished is sufficient to prove the point involved.

(c) *Acceptability of photocopies.* Photocopies of documents necessary to establish birth, death, marriage or relationship under the provisions of §§ 3.205 through 3.215 of this part are acceptable as evidence if the Department of Veterans Affairs is satisfied that the copies are genuine and free from alteration. Otherwise, VA may request a copy of the document certified over the signature and official seal of the person having custody of such record.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900-0624)

[26 FR 1572, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975; 45 FR 72655, Nov. 3, 1980; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994; 61 FR 56626, Nov. 4, 1996; 66 FR 56614, Nov. 9, 2001]

§ 3.205 Marriage.

(a) *Proof of marriage.* Marriage is established by one of the following types of evidence:

(1) Copy or abstract of the public record of marriage, or a copy of the church record of marriage, containing sufficient data to identify the parties,

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the date and place of marriage, and the number of prior marriages if shown on the official record.

(2) Official report from service department as to marriage which occurred while the veteran was in service.

(3) The affidavit of the clergyman or magistrate who officiated.

(4) The original certificate of marriage, if the Department of Veterans Affairs is satisfied that it is genuine and free from alteration.

(5) The affidavits or certified statements of two or more eyewitnesses to the ceremony.

(6) In jurisdictions where marriages other than by ceremony are recognized the affidavits or certified statements of one or both of the parties to the marriage, if living, setting forth all of the facts and circumstances concerning the alleged marriage, such as the agreement between the parties at the beginning of their cohabitation, the period of cohabitation, places and dates of residences, and whether children were born as the result of the relationship. This evidence should be supplemented by affidavits or certified statements from two or more persons who know as the result of personal observation the reputed relationship which existed between the parties to the alleged marriage including the periods of cohabitation, places of residences, whether the parties held themselves out as married, and whether they were generally accepted as such in the communities in which they lived.

(7) Any other secondary evidence which reasonably supports a belief by the Adjudicating activity that a valid marriage actually occurred.

(b) *Valid marriage.* In the absence of conflicting information, proof of marriage which meets the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section together with the claimant's certified statement concerning the date, place and circumstances of dissolution of any prior marriage may be accepted as establishing a valid marriage, provided that such facts, if they were to be corroborated by record evidence, would warrant acceptance of the marriage as valid. Where necessary to a determination because of conflicting information or protest by a party having an inter-

est therein, proof of termination of a prior marriage will be shown by proof of death, or a certified copy or a certified abstract of final decree of divorce or annulment specifically reciting the effects of the decree.

(c) *Marriages deemed valid.* Where a surviving spouse has submitted proof of marriage in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section and also meets the requirements of §3.52, the claimant's signed statement that he or she had no knowledge of an impediment to the marriage to the veteran will be accepted, in the absence of information to the contrary, as proof of that fact.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Marriages deemed valid. See §3.52. Definitions; marriage. See §3.1(j). Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[26 FR 1572, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 6281, July 3, 1962; 36 FR 20946, Nov. 2, 1971; 40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975; 45 FR 72655, Nov. 3, 1980; 47 FR 28096, June 29, 1982; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987; 58 FR 37857, July 14, 1993; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

§3.206 Divorce.

The validity of a divorce decree regular on its face, will be questioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs only when such validity is put in issue by a party thereto or a person whose interest in a claim for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits would be affected thereby. In cases where recognition of the decree is thus brought into question:

(a) Where the issue is whether the veteran is single or married (dissolution of a subsisting marriage), there must be a bona fide domicile in addition to the standards of the granting jurisdiction respecting validity of divorce;

(b) Where the issue is the validity of marriage to a veteran following a divorce, the matter of recognition of the divorce by the Department of Veterans Affairs (including any question of bona fide domicile) will be determined according to the laws of the jurisdictions specified in §3.1(j).

(c) Where a foreign divorce has been granted the residents of a State whose laws consider such decrees to be valid, it will thereafter be considered as valid under the laws of the jurisdictions

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specified in §3.1(j) in the absence of a determination to the contrary by a court of last resort in those jurisdictions.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[27 FR 6281, July 3, 1962, as amended at 35 FR 16831, Oct. 31, 1970; 40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987]

§ 3.207 Void or annulled marriage.

Proof that a marriage was void or has been annulled should consist of:

(a) *Void*. A certified statement from the claimant setting forth the circumstances which rendered the marriage void, together with such other evidence as may be required for a determination.

(b) *Annulled*. A copy or abstract of the decree of annulment. A decree regular on its face will be accepted unless there is reason to question the basic authority of the court to render annulment decrees or there is evidence indicating that the annulment may have been obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates, void or annulled marriage. See §3.400 (u) and (v). Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[28 FR 2904, Mar. 3, 1963, as amended at 40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994]

§ 3.208 Claims based on attained age.

In claims for pension where the age of the veteran or surviving spouse is material, the statements of age will be accepted where they are in agreement with other statements in the record as to age. However, where there is a variance in such records, the youngest age will be accepted subject to the submission of evidence as outlined in §3.209.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975, as amended at 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987]

§ 3.209 Birth.

Age or relationship is established by one of the following types of evidence. If the evidence submitted for proof of age or relationship indicates a difference in the name of the person as shown by other records, the discrep-

ancy is to be reconciled by an affidavit or certified statement identifying the person having the changed name as the person whose name appears in the evidence of age or relationship.

(a) A copy or abstract of the public record of birth. Such a record established more than 4 years after the birth will be accepted as proof of age or relationship if, it is not inconsistent with material of record with the Department of Veterans Affairs, or if it shows on its face that it is based upon evidence which would be acceptable under this section.

(b) A copy of the church record of baptism. Such a record of baptism performed more than 4 years after birth will not be accepted as proof of age or relationship unless it is consistent with material of record with the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will include at least one reference to age or relationship made at a time when such reference was not essential to establishing entitlement to the benefit claimed.

(c) Official report from the service department as to birth which occurred while the veteran was in service.

(d) Affidavit or a certified statement of the physician or midwife in attendance at birth.

(e) Copy of Bible or other family record certified to by a notary public or other officer with authority to administer oaths, who should state in what year the Bible or other book in which the record appears was printed, whether the record bears any erasures or other marks of alteration, and whether from the appearance of the writing he or she believes the entries to have been made at the time purported.

(f) Affidavits or certified statements of two or more persons, preferably disinterested, who will state their ages, showing the name, date, and place of birth of the person whose age or relationship is being established, and that to their own knowledge such person is the child of such parents (naming the parents) and stating the source of their knowledge.

(g) Other evidence which is adequate to establish the facts in issue, including census records, original baptismal records, hospital records, insurance

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policies, school, employment, immigration, or naturalization records.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[26 FR 1573, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 1899, Feb. 28, 1962; 40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975; 47 FR 28096, June 29, 1982; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994]

§3.210 Child's relationship.

(a) *Legitimate child.* Where it is necessary to determine the legitimacy of a child, evidence will be required to establish the legality of the marriage of the mother of the child to the veteran or to show that the child is otherwise legitimate by State laws together with evidence of birth as outlined in §3.209. Where the legitimacy of a child is not a factor, evidence to establish legitimacy will not be required: *Provided*, That, evidence is on file which meets the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section sufficient to warrant recognition of the relationship of the child without regard to legitimacy.

(b) *Illegitimate child.* As to the mother of an illegitimate child, proof of birth is all that is required. As to the father, the sufficiency of evidence will be determined in accordance with the facts in the individual case. Proof of such relationship will consist of:

(1) An acknowledgment in writing signed by him; or

(2) Evidence that he has been identified as the child's father by a judicial decree ordering him to contribute to the child's support or for other purposes; or

(3) Any other secondary evidence which reasonably supports a finding of relationship, as determined by an official authorized to approve such findings, such as:

(i) A copy of the public record of birth or church record of baptism, showing that the veteran was the informant and was named as parent of the child; or

(ii) Statements of persons who know that the veteran accepted the child as his; or

(iii) Information obtained from service department or public records, such as school or welfare agencies, which shows that with his knowledge the vet-

eran was named as the father of the child.

(c) *Adopted child.* Except as provided in paragraph (c)(1) of this section evidence of relationship will include a copy of the decree of adoption or a copy of the adoptive placement agreement and such other evidence as may be necessary.

(1) In jurisdictions where petition must be made to the court for release of adoption documents or information, or where release of such documents or information is prohibited, the following may be accepted to establish the fact of adoption:

(i) As to a child adopted into the veteran's family, a copy of the child's revised birth certificate.

(ii) As to a child adopted out of the veteran's family, a statement over the signature of the judge or the clerk of the court setting forth the child's former name and the date of adoption, or a certified statement by the veteran, the veteran's surviving spouse, apportionee, or their fiduciaries setting forth the child's former name, date of birth, and the date and fact of adoption together with evidence indicating that the child's original public record of birth has been removed from such records. Where application is made for an apportionment under §3.458(d) on behalf of a child adopted out of the veteran's family, the evidence must be sufficient to establish the veteran as the natural parent of the child.

(2) As to a child adopted by the veteran's surviving spouse after the veteran's death, the statement of the adoptive parent or custodian of the child will be accepted in absence of information to the contrary, to show that the child was a member of the veteran's household at the date of the veteran's death and that recurring contributions were not being received for the child's maintenance sufficient to provide for the major portion of the child's support, from any person other than the veteran or surviving spouse or from any public or private welfare organization which furnished services or assistance to children. (Pub. L. 86-195)

(d) *Stepchild.* Evidence of relationship of a stepchild will consist of proof of birth as outlined in §3.209, evidence of

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the marriage of the veteran to the natural parent of the child, and evidence that the child is a member of the veteran's household or was a member of the veteran's household at the date of the veteran's death.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[26 FR 1573, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 1899, Feb. 28, 1962; 28 FR 2959, Mar. 26, 1963; 38 FR 871, Jan. 5, 1973; 47 FR 28096, June 29, 1982; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994]

§3.211 Death.

Death should be established by one of the following types of evidence:

(a)(1) A copy of the public record of the State or community where death occurred.

(2) A copy of a coroner's report of death or a verdict of a coroner's jury of the State or community where death occurred, provided such report or verdict properly identified the deceased.

(b) Where death occurs in a hospital or institution under the control of the United States Government:

(1) A death certificate signed by a medical officer; or

(2) A clinical summary or other report showing fact and date of death signed by a medical officer.

(c) An official report of death of a member of a uniformed service from the Secretary of the department concerned where death occurs while deceased was on the retired list, in an inactive duty status, or in the active service.

(d) Where death occurs abroad:

(1) A United States consular report of death bearing the signature and seal of the United States consul; or

(2) A copy of the public record of death authenticated (see §3.202(b)(4) for exception) by the United States consul or other agency of the State Department; or

(3) An official report of death from the head of the department concerned, where the deceased person was, at the time of death, a civilian employee of such department.

(e) If the foregoing evidence cannot be furnished, the reason must be stated. The fact of death may then be established by the affidavits of persons who have personal knowledge of the

fact of death, have viewed the body of the deceased, know it to be the body of the person whose death is being established, setting forth all the facts and circumstances concerning the death, place, date, time, and cause thereof.

(f) If proof of death, as defined in paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section cannot be furnished, a finding of fact of death, where death is otherwise shown by competent evidence, may be made by an official authorized to approve such findings. Where it is indicated that the veteran died under circumstances which precluded recovery or identification of the body, the fact of death should be established by the best evidence, which from the nature of the case must be supposed to exist.

(g) In the absence of evidence to the contrary, a finding of fact of death made by another Federal agency will be accepted for the purposes of paragraph (f) of this section.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[26 FR 1573, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 1899, Feb. 28, 1962; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987; 59 FR 46338, Sept. 8, 1994]

§3.212 Unexplained absence for 7 years.

(a) If satisfactory evidence is produced establishing the fact of the continued and unexplained absence of any individual from his or her home and family for a period of 7 years or more and that a diligent search disclosed no evidence of his or her existence after the date of disappearance, and if evidence as provided in §3.211 cannot be furnished, the death of such individual as of the expiration of such period may be considered as sufficiently proved.

(b) No State law providing for presumption of death will be applicable to claims for benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the finding of death will be final and conclusive except where suit is filed for insurance under 38 U.S.C. 1984.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 108)

(c) In the absence of evidence to the contrary, a finding of death made by

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another Federal agency will be accepted if the finding meets the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[26 FR 1573, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 1899, Feb. 28, 1962; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987]

§3.213 Change of status affecting entitlement.

(a) *General.* For the purpose of establishing entitlement to a higher rate of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation based on the existence of a dependent, VA will require evidence which satisfies the requirements of §3.204. For the purpose of reducing or discontinuing such benefits, a statement by a claimant or payee setting forth the month and year of change of status which would result in a reduction or discontinuance of benefits to that person will be accepted, in the absence of contradictory information. This includes:

(1) *Veteran.* A statement by the veteran setting forth the month and year of death of a spouse, child, or dependent parent.

(2) *Surviving spouse.* A statement by the surviving spouse or remarried surviving spouse setting forth the month and year of remarriage and any change of name. (An award for a child or children who are otherwise entitled may be made to commence the day following the date of discontinuance of any payments to the surviving spouse.)

(3) *Child.* A statement by the veteran or surviving spouse (where an additional allowance is being paid to the veteran or surviving spouse for a child), or fiduciary, setting forth the month and year of the child's death, marriage, or discontinuance of school attendance. A similar statement by a child who is receiving payments direct will be accepted to establish the child's marriage or the discontinuance of school attendance. Where appropriate, the month and year of discontinuance of school attendance will be required in addition to the month and year of death or marriage of a child.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(4) *Parent.* A statement by a parent setting forth the month and year:

(i) Of marriage or remarriage;

(ii) When two parents or a parent and spouse ceased living together;

(iii) When two parents or a parent and spouse resumed living together following a period of separation;

(iv) Of divorce or death of a spouse.

(b) *Date not reported.* If the month and year of the event is not reported, the award will be reduced or discontinued, whichever is appropriate, effective date of last payment. The payee will be requested to furnish within 60 days from the date of request a statement setting forth the date of the event. Where payments are continued at a reduced rate, the award will be discontinued effective date of last payment if the required statement is not received within the 60-day period. Payments on a discontinued award may be resumed, if otherwise in order, from the date of discontinuance if the necessary information is received within 1 year from the date of request; otherwise from the date of receipt of a new claim.

(c) *Contradictory information.* Where there is reason to believe that the event reported may have occurred at an earlier date, formal proof will be required.

CROSS REFERENCES: Abandoned claims. See §3.158. Change in status of dependents. See §3.651. Material change in income, net worth or change in status. See §3.660. Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[26 FR 1574, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 1899, Feb. 28, 1962; 27 FR 11888, Dec. 1, 1962; 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987; 61 FR 56626, Nov. 4, 1996]

§3.214 Court decisions; unremarried surviving spouses.

Effective July 15, 1958, a decision rendered by a Federal court in an action to which the United States was a party holding that a surviving spouse of a veteran has not remarried will be followed in determining eligibility for pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

CROSS REFERENCES: Abandoned claims. See §3.158. Change in status of dependents. See §3.651. Dependency, income and estate. See

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§3.660. Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[31 FR 2782, Feb. 16, 1966, as amended at 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987]

§3.215 Termination of marital relationship or conduct.

On or after January 1, 1971, benefits may be resumed to an unmarried surviving spouse upon filing of an application and submission of satisfactory evidence that the surviving spouse has ceased living with another person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as that person's spouse or that the surviving spouse has terminated a relationship or conduct which had created an inference or presumption of remarriage or related to open or notorious adulterous cohabitation or similar conduct, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990. Such evidence may consist of, but is not limited to, the surviving spouse's certified statement of the fact.

[57 FR 10426, Mar. 26, 1992, as amended at 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993]

§3.216 Mandatory disclosure of social security numbers.

Any person who applies for or receives any compensation or pension benefit as defined in §§3.3, 3.4, or 3.5 of this part, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18, shall, as a condition for receipt or continued receipt of benefits, furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs upon request with his or her social security number and the social security number of any dependent or beneficiary on whose behalf, or based upon whom, benefits are sought or received. However, no one shall be required to furnish a social security number for any person to whom none has been assigned. Benefits will be terminated if a beneficiary fails to furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs with his or her social security number or the social security number of any dependent or beneficiary on whose behalf, or based upon whom, benefits are sought or received, within 60 days from the date the beneficiary is

requested to furnish the social security number.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1832, 5101(c))

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900-0522)

[57 FR 8268, Mar. 9, 1992, as amended at 57 FR 27935, June 23, 1992; 65 FR 35282, June 2, 2000; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4248, Jan. 25, 2011]

§3.217 Submission of statements or information affecting entitlement to benefits.

(a) For purposes of this part, unless specifically provided otherwise, the submission of information or a statement that affects entitlement to benefits by e-mail, facsimile, or other written electronic means, will satisfy a requirement or authorization that the statement or information be submitted in writing.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (a): Section 3.217(a) merely concerns the submission of information or a statement in writing. Other requirements specified in this part, such as a requirement to use a specific form, to provide specific information, to provide a signature, or to provide a certified statement, must still be met.

(b) For purposes of this part, unless specifically provided otherwise, VA may take action affecting entitlement to benefits based on oral or written information or statements provided to VA by a beneficiary or his or her fiduciary. However, VA may not take action based on oral information or statements unless the VA employee receiving the information meets the following conditions:

(1) During the conversation in which the information or statement is provided, the VA employee:

(i) Identifies himself or herself as a VA employee who is authorized to receive the information or statement (these are VA employees authorized to take actions under §§2.3 or 3.100 of this chapter);

(ii) Verifies the identity of the provider as either the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary by obtaining specific information about the beneficiary that can be verified from the beneficiary's VA records, such as Social Security number, date of birth, branch of military service, dates of military service, or other information; and

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(iii) Informs the provider that the information or statement will be used for the purpose of calculating benefit amounts; and

(2) During or following the conversation in which the information or statement is provided, the VA employee documents in the beneficiary's VA records the specific information or statement provided, the date such information or statement was provided, the identity of the provider, the steps taken to verify the identity of the provider as being either the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary, and that he or she informed the provider that the information would be used for the purpose of calculating benefit amounts.

AUTHORITY: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1115, 1506, 5104.

[66 FR 56614, Nov. 9, 2001]

DEPENDENCY, INCOME AND ESTATE

REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO PROGRAMS IN EFFECT PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1979

§ 3.250 Dependency of parents; compensation.

(a) *Income*—(1) *Conclusive dependency*. Dependency of a parent (other than one who is residing in a foreign country) will be held to exist where the monthly income does not exceed:

(i) \$400 for a mother or father not living together;

(ii) \$660 for a mother and father, or remarried parent and spouse, living together;

(iii) \$185 for each additional "member of the family" as defined in paragraph (b)(2).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 102(a))

(2) *Excess income*. Where the income exceeds the monthly amounts stated in paragraph (a)(1) of this section dependency will be determined on the facts in the individual case under the principles outlined in paragraph (b) of this section. In such cases, dependency will not be held to exist if it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of the claimant's estate be consumed for his or her maintenance.

(3) *Foreign residents*. There is no conclusive presumption of dependency. Dependency will be determined on the facts in the individual case under the principles outlined in this section.

(b) *Basic rule*. Dependency will be held to exist if the father or mother of the veteran does not have an income sufficient to provide reasonable maintenance for such father or mother and members of his or her family under legal age and for dependent adult members of the family if the dependency of such adult member results from mental or physical incapacity.

(1) "Reasonable Maintenance" includes not only housing, food, clothing, and medical care sufficient to sustain life, but such items beyond the bare necessities as well as other requirements reasonably necessary to provide those conveniences and comforts of living suitable to and consistent with the parents' reasonable mode of life.

(2) "Member of the family" means a person (other than spouse) including a relative in the ascending as well as descending class, whom the father or mother is under moral or legal obligation to support. In determining whether other members of the family under legal age are factors in necessary expenses of the mother or father, consideration will be given to any income from business or property (including trusts) actually available, directly or indirectly, to the mother or father for the support of the minor but not to the corpus of the estate or the income of the minor which is not so available.

(c) *Inception of dependency*. The fact that the veteran has made habitual contributions to the father or mother, or both, is not conclusive evidence that dependency existed but will be considered in connection with all other evidence. In death claims, it is not material whether dependency arose prior or subsequent to the veteran's death. (See § 3.1000(d)(3) as to accrued.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 102(a))

(d) *Remarriage*. Dependency will not be denied solely because of remarriage (38 U.S.C. 102(b)(1)). Compensation may be continued if the parent submits evidence to show that dependency exists, considering the combined income and expenses of the parent and spouse.

[28 FR 29, Jan. 1, 1963, as amended at 40 FR 16065, Apr. 9, 1975; 49 FR 47004, Nov. 30, 1984; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996]

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§ 3.251 Income of parents; dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) *Annual income limitations and rates.* (1) Dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable to a parent or parents whose annual income exceeds the limitations set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1315 (b), (c), or (d).

(2) Where there is only one parent, and the parent has remarried and is living with his or her spouse, dependency and indemnity compensation will be paid under either the formula in 38 U.S.C. 1315(b)(1) or the formula in 38 U.S.C. 1315(d), whichever will provide the greater monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation. The total combined annual income of the parent and spouse will be counted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315)

(3) Where the claim is based on service in the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, or as a guerrilla or as a Philippine Scout under section 14, Pub. L. 190, 79th Congress, the income limitation will be at a rate of \$0.50 for each dollar. See § 3.100(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107)

(4) If the remarriage of a parent has been terminated, or the parent is separated from his or her spouse, the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation for the parent will be that which would be payable if there were one parent alone or two parents not living together, whichever is applicable.

(5) Where there are two parents living and only one parent has filed claim, the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation will be that which would be payable if both parents had filed claim.

(b) *Basic rule.* Payments of any kind or from any source will be counted as income unless specifically excluded. Income will be counted for the calendar year in which it is received and total income for the full calendar year will be considered except as provided in § 3.260.

[28 FR 29, Jan. 1, 1963, as amended at 31 FR 14455, Nov. 10, 1966; 40 FR 16065, Apr. 9, 1975; 41 FR 15411, Apr. 13, 1976; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995]

§ 3.252 Annual income; pension; Mexican border period and later war periods.

(a) *Annual income limitations; old-law pension.* Where the right to old-law pension is payable under section 306(b) of Pub. L. 95-588 (92 Stat. 2497), pension is not payable if the pensioner's annual income exceeds the income limitations prescribed by § 3.26(c).

(b) *Annual income and net worth limitations; Pub. L. 86-211.* Pension is not payable to a veteran, surviving spouse or child whose annual income exceeds the limitations set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 or 1542; or to a veteran, surviving spouse or child if it is reasonable that some part of the claimant's estate be consumed for his or her maintenance. Where a veteran and spouse are living together, the separate income of the spouse will be considered as the veteran's income as provided in § 3.262(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1543)

(c) *Basic rule.* Payments of any kind or from any source will be counted as income unless specifically excluded. Income will be counted for the calendar year in which it is received and total income for the full calendar year will be considered except as provided in § 3.260.

(d) *Veteran with a spouse.* For the purpose of determining eligibility under paragraph (b) of this section the pension rates provided by 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) may be authorized for a married veteran if he or she is living with or, if estranged, is reasonably contributing to the support of his or her spouse. The determination of "reasonable" contribution will be based on all the circumstances in the case, considering the income and estate of the veteran and the separate income and estate of the spouse. Apportionment of the veteran's pension under § 3.451 meets the requirement of reasonable contribution.

(e) *Surviving spouse with a child—(1) Child.* The term "child" means a child as defined in § 3.57. Where a veteran's child is born after the veteran dies, the surviving spouse will not be considered a surviving spouse with a child prior to the child's date of birth.

(2) *Veteran's child not in surviving spouse's custody.* Where the veteran was

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survived by a surviving spouse and by a child, the income increments for a surviving spouse and child apply even though the child is not the child of the surviving spouse and not in his or her custody.

(3) *Income of child.* The separate income received by a child or children, regardless of custody, will not be considered in computing the surviving spouse's income. Where the separate income of the child is turned over to the surviving spouse, only so much of the money as is left after deducting any expenses for maintenance of the child will be considered the surviving spouse's income.

(4) *Alternative rate.* Whenever the monthly pension rate payable to the surviving spouse under the formula in 38 U.S.C. 1541(c) is less than the rate payable for one child under section 1542 if the surviving spouse were not entitled, the surviving spouse will be paid the child's rate.

(f) *Income over maximum; reduced aid and attendance allowance.* Beginning January 1, 1977, veterans in need of regular aid and attendance who are not receiving pension because their income exceeds the applicable statutory limitation may be eligible for a reduced aid and attendance allowance. The amount payable is the regular aid and attendance allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1521(d)(1) reduced by 16.6 percent for each \$100, or portion thereof, by which the veteran's annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation. The reduced aid and attendance allowance is payable when:

(1) A veteran in need of regular aid and attendance is denied pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521 solely because the veteran's annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (b)(3) and (c)(3); or

(2) Pension payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521 to a veteran in need of regular aid and attendance is discontinued solely because the veteran's annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (b)(3) or (c)(3); and

(3) The veteran's annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (b)(3) or (c)(3) by an amount not greater than

the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (d)(2).

CROSS REFERENCES: Basic pension determinations. See §3.314. Determination of permanent need for regular aid and attendance and "permanently bedridden". See §3.352.

[28 FR 30, Jan. 1, 1963, as amended at 40 FR 16065, Apr. 9, 1975; 41 FR 15411, Apr. 13, 1976; 41 FR 56803, Dec. 30, 1976; 44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

§§ 3.253–3.255 [Reserved]

§ 3.256 Eligibility reporting requirements.

(a) *Obligation to report changes in factors affecting entitlement.* Any individual who has applied for or receives pension or parents' dependency and indemnity compensation must promptly notify the Secretary of any change affecting entitlement in any of the following:

- (1) Income;
- (2) Net worth or corpus of estate;
- (3) Marital status;
- (4) Nursing home patient status;
- (5) School enrollment status of a child 18 years of age or older; or
- (6) Any other factor that affects entitlement to benefits under the provisions of this part.

(b) *Eligibility verification reports.* (1) For purposes of this section the term eligibility verification report means a form prescribed by the Secretary that is used to request income, net worth (if applicable), dependency status, and any other information necessary to determine or verify entitlement to pension or parents' dependency and indemnity compensation.

(2) VA will not require old law or section 306 pensioners to submit eligibility verification reports unless the Secretary determines that doing so is necessary to preserve program integrity.

(3) Except for a parent who has attained 72 years of age and has been paid dependency and indemnity compensation during two consecutive calendar years, the Secretary shall require an eligibility verification report from individuals receiving parents' dependency and indemnity compensation under the following circumstances:

- (i) If the Social Security Administration has not verified the beneficiary's

Social Security number and, if the beneficiary is married, his or her spouse's Social Security number.

(ii) If there is reason to believe that the beneficiary or, if the spouse's income could affect entitlement, his or her spouse may have received income other than Social Security during the current or previous calendar year; or

(iii) If the Secretary determines that an eligibility verification report is necessary to preserve program integrity.

(4) An individual who applies for or receives pension or parents' dependency and indemnity compensation as defined in §§ 3.3 or 3.5 of this part shall, as a condition of receipt or continued receipt of benefits, furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs an eligibility verification report upon request.

(c) If VA requests that a claimant or beneficiary submit an eligibility verification report but he or she fails to do so within 60 days of the date of the VA request, the Secretary shall suspend the award or disallow the claim.

(Authority: Sec. 306(a)(2) and (b)(3), Pub. L. 95-588, 92 Stat. 2508-2509; 38 U.S.C. 1315(e))

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control numbers 2900-0101 and 2900-0624)

[63 FR 53595, Oct. 6, 1998, as amended at 66 FR 56614, Nov. 9, 2001; 73 FR 40466, July 15, 2008]

§ 3.257 Children; no surviving spouse entitled.

Where pension is not payable to a surviving spouse because his or her annual income exceeds the statutory limitation or because of his or her net worth, payments will be made to or for the child or children as if there were no surviving spouse.

[62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

§§ 3.258-3.259 [Reserved]

§ 3.260 Computation of income.

For entitlement to pension or dependency and indemnity compensation, income will be counted for the calendar year in which it is received.

(a) *Installments.* Income will be determined by the total amount received or anticipated during the calendar year.

(b) *Deferred determinations.* Where there is doubt as to the amount of the anticipated income, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation will be allowed at the lowest appropriate rate or will be withheld, as may be in order, until the end of the calendar year when the total income received during the year may be determined.

(c) *Proportionate income limitations; excess income.* A proportionate income limitation will be established under the conditions set forth in paragraph (d) of this section except where application of a proportionate income limitation would result in payment of a lower rate than would be payable on the basis of income for the full calendar year.

(d) *Proportionate income limitations; computation.* Income limitations will be computed proportionately for the purpose of determining initial entitlement, or for resuming payments on an award which was discontinued for a reason other than excess income or a change in marital or dependency status. A proportionate income limitation will be established for the period from the date of entitlement to the end of that calendar year. The total amount of income received by the claimant during that period will govern the payment of benefits. Income received prior to the date of entitlement will be disregarded.

(e) *Proportionate income limitations; spouse.* In determining whether proportionate computation is applicable to a claim under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432), the total income for the calendar year of entitlement of both veteran and that of the spouse available for use of the veteran will be considered. If a proportionate income limitation is then applicable, it will be applied to both the veteran's and the spouse's income. The spouse's income will not be included, however, where his or her total income for the calendar year does not exceed \$1,200.

(f) *Rate changes.* In years after that for which entitlement to pension or dependency and indemnity compensation has been established or reestablished as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, total income for the calendar year will govern the payment of benefits. Where there is a change in the

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conditions of entitlement because of a change in marital or dependency status, entitlement for each period will be determined separately. For the period when the claimant was married or had a dependent, the rate payable will be determined under the annual income limitation or increment applicable to a claimant who is married or has a dependent. For the period when the claimant was unmarried or without a dependent, the rate payable will be determined under the annual income limitation or increment applicable to a claimant who is not married or has no dependent. Since these determinations will be based on total income for the calendar year, it is not material whether such income was received before or after the change of status.

(g) *Fractions of dollars.* In computing a claimant's annual income a fraction of a dollar will be disregarded for the purpose of determining entitlement to monthly payments of pension and dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(g)(2); 1503(b))

[28 FR 30, Jan. 1, 1963, as amended at 29 FR 2944, Mar. 4, 1964; 37 FR 6677, Apr. 1, 1972; 40 FR 16066, Apr. 9, 1975]

§ 3.261 Character of income; exclusions and estates.

The following factors will be considered in determining whether a claimant meets the requirements of §§ 3.250, 3.251 and 3.252 with reference to dependency, income limitations and corpus of estate:

(a) *Income.*

Income	Dependency (parents)	Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)	Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses and children)	Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)	See—
(1) Total income from employment, business, investments, or rents.	Included	Included	Included	Included	§ 3.262(a).
(2) Income of spouse .....	.....do .....	.....do	Excluded .....	.....do	§ 3.262(b).
(3) Earnings of members of family under legal age.	.....do	Excluded .....	.....do	Excluded	§ 3.250(b)(2). § 3.252(e)(3).
(4) Earned income of child-claimant .....	.....do .....	.....do	Included .....	.....do	
(5) Gifts, including contributions from adult members of family:					
Property .....	.....do	Included .....	.....do .....	.....do	§ 3.262(k).
Money .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	Included.	
(6) Value of maintenance by relative, friend, or organization.	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	§ 3.262(c).
(7) Rental value of property owned by and resided in by claimant.	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	
(8) Charitable donations .....	.....do .....	.....do	Included .....	.....do	§ 3.262(d).
(9) Family allowance authorized by service personnel.	Included	Included .....	.....do	Included.	
(10) Reasonable value of allowances to person in service in addition to base pay.	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	Included except as earned income of child-claimant.	
(11) Mustering-out pay	Excluded .....	.....do	Excluded .....	.....do	
(12) Six-months' death gratuity .....	.....do	Excluded .....	.....do	Excluded.	
(13) Bonus or similar cash gratuity paid by any State based on service in Armed Forces of United States.	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded.	
(14) Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan; Survivor Benefit Plan (10 U.S.C. ch. 73):					
Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (Subch. I):					
Annuities .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	
Refund (10 U.S.C. 1446)	Included	Included	Included	Included.	
Survivor Benefit Plan (Subch. II) (Pub. L. 92-425; 86 Stat. 706).	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	§ 3.262(e).
Annuity under § 653, Pub. L. 100-456	Included	Included	Excluded	Excluded	§ 3.262(r)
(15) Retirement pay received direct from service department.	Included	Included	Included	Included	§ 3.262(e).
.....dododododo	§ 3.262(h).
(16) Retirement benefits; generaldodododo	§ 3.262(e).

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Income	Dependency (parents)	Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)	Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses and children)	Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)	See—
(17) Social security benefits:					
Old age and survivors', and disability insurance.	Included	Included	Included	Included	§ 3.262(f).
Charitable programs	Excluded	Excluded .....	.....do	Excluded.	
Lump-sum death payments	Included .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
Supplemental security income	Excluded	Excluded .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
(18) Railroad Retirement benefits .....	.....do	Included	Disability pension—Excluded Death pension—Included.	Included	§ 3.262(g).
(19) Retirement pay waived under Federal statute.	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded .....	.....do	§ 3.262(h).
(20) Department of Veterans Affairs payments:					
Pension	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded.	
Compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation.	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
World War I adjusted compensation .....	.....do	Included .....	.....do	Included.	
U.S. Government life insurance or national service life insurance for disability or death, maturity of endowment policies, and dividends, including special and termination dividends.	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded.	
Servicemembers' group life insurance .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
Veterans' group life insurance .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
Servicemembers' indemnity .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
Subsistence allowance (38 U.S.C. ch. 31)	Included	Included	Included	Included.	
Veterans educational assistance in excess of amounts expended for training (38 U.S.C. ch. 34).	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do.	
Educational assistance (38 U.S.C. ch. 35)	.....do .....	.....do	Excluded	Excluded.	
Special allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1312(a).	Excluded	Included .....	.....do	Included.	
Statutory burial allowance .....	.....do	Excluded .....	.....do	Excluded.	
Accrued .....	.....do	Included, except accrued as reimbursement.	.....do	Included, except accrued as reimbursement.	
(21) Compensation (civilian) for injury or death.	Included	Included	Included	Included	§ 3.262(i).
(22) Contributions by a public or private employer to a:					
Public or private health or hospitalization plan for an active or retired employee.	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded.	
Retired employee as reimbursement for premiums for supplementary medical insurance benefits under the Social Security Program (Pub. L. 91-588; 84 Stat. 1580).	Included	Included	Excluded	Excluded.	
(23) Overtime pay; Government employees ...	Included	Included	Disability pension—Excluded. Death pension—Included.	Included.	
(24) Commercial life insurance; disability, accident, or health insurance, less payments of medical or hospital expenses resulting from the accident or disease for which payments are made.	Included (as received).	Included (as received).	Included (special provision).	Included (as received).	§ 3.262(j).
(25) Commercial annuities or endowments ....	.....do	Included (special provision).	.....do	Included (special provision).	§ 3.262(j).
(26) Dividends from commercial insurance	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded.	
(27) Insurance under Merchant Marine Act of 1936, as amended.	Included	Included	Included	Included.	

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Income	Dependency (parents)	Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)	Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses and children)	Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)	See—
(28) Reimbursement for casualty loss (Pub. L. 100-687).	Included	Excluded	Included	Included	§ 3.262(t)
Other fire Insurance	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	§ 3.262(t)
(29) Bequests, devises and inheritances:					
Property	Included	Excluded	Included .....	.....do	§ 3.262(k).
Money .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	Included.	
Joint bank accounts .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	Excluded	§ 3.262(k)(1).
(30) Profit from sale of property	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	§ 3.262(k).
(31) Jury duty or obligatory civic duties .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	
(32) Relocation payments (Pub. L. 90-448; Pub. L. 90-495).	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	§ 3.262(c).
(33) The following programs administered by the ACTION Agency:					
Foster Grandparent Program and Older Americans Community Service Programs payments (Pub. L. 93-29; 87 Stat. 55).	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	§ 3.262(q)(1).
Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), University Year for ACTION (UYA), Program for Local Services (PLS), ACTION Cooperative Volunteers (ACV), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), and Older American Community Service Programs, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companion Program (Pub. L. 93-113; 87 Stat. 394).	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	§ 3.262(q)(2).
(34) The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Active Corps of Executives (ACE) administered by the Small Business Administration. (Pub. L. 93-113; 87 Stat. 394).	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do .....	.....do	§ 3.262(q)(2).
(35) Income received under Section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (Pub. L. 101-426).	Excluded	Excluded	Included	Included	§ 3.262(t)
(36) Income received from income tax returns	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	§ 3.262(u)
(37) Other amounts excluded from income by statute.	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	§ 3.262(v) § 3.279

¹ The compensation received through a crime victim compensation program will be excluded from income computations unless the total amount of assistance received from all federally funded programs is sufficient to fully compensate the claimant for losses suffered as a result of the crime.

(b) *Deduction of amounts paid by claimant.*

Deduction	Dependency (parents)	Dependency and indemnity compensation	Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses, and children)	Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses, and children)	See
(1) Unusual medical expenses	Not authorized	Authorized	Not authorized	Authorized	§§ 3.262(b)(1) and (1).
(2) Veteran: just debts, expenses of last illness and burial.	Not authorized	Authorized, except debts.	Not authorized	Authorized	§§ 3.262(m) and (o).
(3) Veteran's spouse or child: expenses of last illness and burial.	Not authorized	Not authorized	Not authorized	Authorized	§ 3.262(n).
(4) Parent's spouse: just debts; expenses of last illness and burial.	Not authorized	Authorized .....	.....	.....	§ 3.262(o).
(5) Prepayment on real property mortgages after death of spouse (Pub. L. 91-588).	Not authorized	Not authorized	Not authorized	Authorized	§§ 3.262(k)(6).

(c) *Corpus of estate.*

	Dependency (parents)	Dependency and indemnity compensation	Pension; old-law (veterans, widows, and children)	Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses, and children)	See
	Considered conditionally	Not considered.	Not considered.	Considered ...	§ 3.263.

[28 FR 31, Jan. 1, 1963, as amended at 29 FR 15205, Nov. 11, 1964; 31 FR 15632, Dec. 13, 1966; 33 FR 15286, Oct. 15, 1968; 36 FR 8446, May 6, 1971; 37 FR 6677, Apr. 1, 1972; 37 FR 7092, Apr. 8, 1972; 37 FR 21436, Oct. 11, 1972; 38 FR 872, Jan. 5, 1973; 38 FR 26804, Sept. 26, 1973; 38 FR 28826, Oct. 17, 1973; 40 FR 13305, Mar. 26, 1975; 40 FR 57459, Dec. 10, 1975; 41 FR 17386, Apr. 26, 1976; 42 FR 43834, Aug. 31, 1977; 57 FR 59298, Dec. 15, 1992; 58 FR 12174, Mar. 3, 1993; 58 FR 31909, June 7, 1993; 58 FR 33766, June 21, 1993; 59 FR 37696, July 25, 1994; 60 FR 2522, Jan. 10, 1995; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995; 62 FR 51278, Sept. 30, 1997; 67 FR 49586, July 31, 2002; 68 FR 60852, Oct. 24, 2003; 70 FR 15591, Mar. 28, 2005; 76 FR 4248, Jan. 25, 2011; 83 FR 47268, Sept 18, 2018]

§ 3.262 Evaluation of income.

(a) *Total income.* All income from sources such as wages, salaries, earnings, bonuses from employers, income from a business or profession or from investments or rents as well as the fair value of personal services, goods or room and board received in lieu thereof will be included.

(1) Salary is not determined by “takehome” pay, but includes deductions made under a retirement act or plan and amounts withheld by virtue of income tax laws.

(2) The gross income from a business or profession may be reduced by the necessary operating expenses, such as cost of goods sold, or expenditures for rent, taxes, and upkeep. Depreciation is not a deductible expense. The cost of repairs or replacement may be deducted. The value of an increase in stock inventory of a business is not considered income.

(3) A loss sustained in operating a business, profession, or farm or from investments may not be deducted from income derived from any other source.

(b) *Income of spouse.* Income of the spouse will be determined under the rules applicable to income of the claimant.

(1) *Parents.* Where the mother and father, or remarried parent and spouse are living together, the total combined income will be considered in determining dependency, or in determining the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to the parent. This rule is equally applicable where

both parents have remarried and each is living with his or her spouse. If the remarriage of a parent has been terminated, or the parent is separated from his or her spouse, income of the spouse will be excluded.

(2) *Veterans.* The separate income of the spouse of a disabled veteran who is entitled to pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, will not be considered. Where pension is payable under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95-588, to a veteran who is living with a spouse there will be included as income of the veteran all income of the spouse in excess of whichever is the greater, the amount of the spouse income exclusion specified in section 306(a)(2)(B) of Pub. L. 95-588 as increased from time to time under section 306 (a)(3) of Pub. L. 95-588 or the total earned income of the spouse, which is reasonably available to or for the veteran, unless hardship to the veteran would result. Each time there is an increase in the spouse income exclusion pursuant to section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95-588, the actual amount of the exclusion will be published in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER. The presumption that inclusion of such income is available to the veteran and would not work a hardship on him or her may be rebutted by evidence of unavailability or of expenses beyond the usual family requirements.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(f); sec. 306(a)(2)(B) of Pub. L. 95-588)

(c) *Maintenance.* The value of maintenance furnished by a relative, friend, or

a charitable organization (civic or governmental) will not be considered income. Where the claimant is maintained in a rest home or other community institution or facility, public or private, because of impaired health or advanced age, money paid to the home or to the claimant to cover the cost of maintenance will not be considered income, regardless of whether it is furnished by a relative, friend or charitable organization. The expense of maintenance is not deductible if it is paid from the claimant's income, except as provided in paragraph (1) of this section in claims for dependency and indemnity compensation.

(d) *Charitable donations.* Charitable donations from public or private relief or welfare organizations will not be considered income except in claims for pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960. In the latter cases, additional charitable allowances received by a claimant for members of his or her family may not be divided per capita in determining the amount of the claimant's income.

(e) *Retirement benefits; general.* Retirement benefits, including an annuity or endowment, paid under a Federal, State, municipal, or private business or industrial plan are considered income as limited by this paragraph. Where the payments received consist of part principal and part interest, interest will not be counted separately.

(1) *Protected pension.* Except as provided in this paragraph (e)(1), effective January 1, 1965, in determining income for pension purposes under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, 10 percent of the retirement payments received by a veteran, surviving spouse, or child will be excluded. The remaining 90 percent will be considered income as received. Where the retirement benefit is based on the claimant's own employment, payments will not be considered income until the amount of the claimant's personal contribution (as distinguished from amounts contributed by the employer) has been received. Thereafter the 10 percent exclusion will apply.

(2) *Pension; Pub. L. 86-211.* Except as provided in this subparagraph, effective January 1, 1965, in determining income for pension purposes, under Pub.

L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432), 10 percent of the retirement payments received by a veteran, the veteran's spouse, surviving spouse, or child will be excluded. The remaining 90 percent will be considered income as received. Where a person was receiving or entitled to receive pension and retirement benefits based on his or her own employment on December 31, 1964, the retirement payments will not be considered income until the amount of the claimant personal contribution (as distinguished from amounts contributed by the employer) has been received. Thereafter the 10 percent exclusion will apply.

(3) *Compensation.* In determining dependency of a parent for compensation purposes, all payments will be considered income as received.

(4) *Dependency and indemnity compensation.* Except as provided in this subparagraph, effective January 1, 1967, in determining income for dependency and indemnity compensation purposes, 10 percent of the retirement payments received by a deceased veteran's parent or by the parent's spouse will be excluded. The remaining 90 percent will be considered income as received. Where a parent was receiving or entitled to receive dependency and indemnity compensation and retirement benefits based on his or her own employment on December 31, 1966, the retirement payments will not be considered income until the amount of the claimant's personal contribution (as distinguished from amounts contributed by the employer) has been received. Thereafter the 10 percent exclusion will apply.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(g), 1503(a)(6))

(f) *Social security benefits.* Old age and survivor's insurance and disability insurance under title II of the Social Security Act will be considered income as a retirement benefit under the rules contained in paragraph (e) of this section. Benefits received under non-contributory programs, such as old age assistance, aid to dependent children, and supplemental security income are subject to the rules contained in paragraph (d) of this section applicable to charitable donations. The lumpsum death payment under title II of the Social Security Act will be considered as

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income except in claims for dependency and indemnity compensation and for pension under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432).

(g) *Railroad retirement benefits*—(1) *Parents, surviving spouses and children.* Retirement benefits received from the Railroad Retirement Board will be considered as income under the rules contained in paragraph (e) of this section. (See paragraph (h) of this section as to waivers.)

(2) *Veterans.* Effective July 1, 1959, retirement benefits received from the Railroad Retirement Board were excluded from consideration as income in determining eligibility for disability pension. (45 U.S.C. 228s-1) This exclusion continues to be applicable to claims under laws in effect on June 30, 1960. For purposes of section 306 pension, such retirement benefits will be considered as income under the rules contained in paragraph (e) of this section.

(h) *Retirement benefits waived.* Except as provided in this paragraph, retirement benefits (pension or retirement payments) which have been waived will be included as income. For the purpose of determining dependency of a parent, or eligibility of a parent for dependency and indemnity compensation or eligibility of a veteran, surviving spouse, or child for pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, retirement benefits from the following sources which have been waived pursuant to Federal statute will not be considered as income:

(1) Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund;

(2) Railroad Retirement Board (see paragraph (g)(2) of this section);

(3) District of Columbia, firemen, policemen, or public school teachers;

(4) Former lighthouse service.

(i) *Compensation (civilian) for injury or death.* (1) Compensation paid by the Bureau of Employees' Compensation, Department of Labor (of the United States), or by Social Security Administration, or by Railroad Retirement Board, or pursuant to any workmen's compensation or employer's liability statute, or damages collected because of personal injury or death, less medical, legal, or other expenses incident to the injury or death, or the collection

or recovery of such moneys will be considered income as received, except as provided in paragraph (i)(2) of this section. The criteria of paragraph (i)(1) of this section are for application as to all medical expenditures after such award or settlement.

(Authority: Pub. L. 92-198, 85 Stat. 663)

(2) For pension, effective October 7, 1966, and for dependency and indemnity compensation effective January 1, 1967, if payments based on permanent and total disability or death are received from the Bureau of Employees' Compensation, Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board, or pursuant to any workmen's compensation or employer's liability statute, there will be excluded 10 percent of the payments received after deduction of medical, legal, and other expenses as authorized by paragraph (i)(1) of this section. The 10 percent exclusion does not apply to damages collected incident to a tort suit under other than an employer's liability law of the United States or a political subdivision of the United States, or to determinations of dependency for compensation purposes.

(j) *Commercial insurance*—(1) *Annuity or endowment insurance.* For pension, effective January 1, 1965, or for dependency and indemnity compensation, effective January 1, 1967, the provisions of paragraph (e) of this section apply. In such cases, 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded. In dependency and indemnity compensation claims, where the parent is receiving or entitled to receive dependency and indemnity compensation on December 31, 1966, and is also receiving or entitled to receive annuity payments on that date, or endowment insurance matures on or before that date, no part of the payments received will be considered income until the full amount of the consideration has been received, after which 10 percent of the amount received will be excluded. For compensation, the full amount of each payment is considered income as received.

(2) *Life insurance; general.* In determining dependency, or eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation, or for section 306 pension the full

amount of payments is considered income as received. For section 306 pension, effective October 7, 1966, and for dependency and indemnity compensation, effective January 1, 1967, 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded.

(3) *Life insurance; old-law pension.* For pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded. Where it is considered that life insurance was received in a lump sum in the calendar year in which the veteran died and payments are actually received in succeeding years, no part of the payments received in succeeding years will be considered income until an amount equal to the lump-sum face value of the policy has been received, after which 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded. The 10 percent exclusion is authorized effective October 7, 1966.

(4) *Disability, accident or health insurance.* For pension, effective October 7, 1966, and for dependency and indemnity compensation, effective January 1, 1967, there will be excluded 10 percent of the payments received for disability after deduction of medical, legal, or other expenses incident to the disability. For compensation, after deduction of such expenses, the full amount of payments is considered income as received.

(k) *Property—(1) Ownership.* The terms of the recorded deed or other evidence of title will constitute evidence of ownership of real or personal property. This includes property acquired through purchase, bequest or inheritance except that, effective January 1, 1971, amounts in joint accounts in banks and similar institutions acquired by reason of the death of another joint owner shall not be considered income of a survivor for section 306 pension purposes. With the foregoing exception, if property is owned jointly each person will be considered as owning a proportionate share. The claimant's share of property held in partnership will be determined on the facts found. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the claimant's statement as to the terms of ownership will be accepted.

(Authority: Sec. 306, Pub. L. 95-588; 92 Stat. 2508)

(2) *Income-producing property.* Income received from real or personal property owned by the claimant will be counted. The claimant's share will be determined in proportion to his right according to the rules of ownership.

(3) *Sale of property.* Except as provided in paragraphs (k)(4) and (5) of this section, net profit from the sale of real or personal property will be counted. In determining net profit from the sale of property owned prior to the date of entitlement, the value at the date of entitlement will be considered in relation to the selling price. Where payments are received in installments, payments will not be considered income until the claimant has received amounts equal to the value of the property at the date of entitlement. Principal and interest will not be counted separately.

(4) *Homes.* Net profit from the sale of the claimant's residence which is received during the calendar year of sale will not be considered as income under the following conditions:

(i) To the extent that it is applied within the calendar year of the sale, or the succeeding calendar year, to the purchase price of another residence as his principal dwelling;

(ii) Such application of the net profit is reported within 1 year following the date so applied, and

(iii) The net profit is so applied after January 10, 1962, to a purchase made after said date.

This exclusion will not apply where the net profit is applied to the price of a home purchased earlier than the calendar year preceding the calendar year of sale of the old residence.

(5) *Sale of property; section 306 pension and dependency and indemnity compensation.* For pension under section 306 pension and for dependency and indemnity compensation, profit from the sale of real or personal property other than in the course of a business will not be considered income. This applies to property acquired either before or after the date of entitlement. Any amounts received in excess of the sales price will be counted as income. Where payments are received in installments, principal and interest will not be counted separately. For pension, this provision is effective January 1, 1965;

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for dependency and indemnity compensation, January 1, 1967.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(10); 38 U.S.C. 1315(g))

(6) *Payments on mortgages on real property; section 306 pension.* Effective January 1, 1971, for the purposes of section 306 pension, an amount equaling any prepayments made by a veteran or surviving spouse on a mortgage or similar type security instrument in existence at the death of veteran or spouse on real property which prior to the death was the principal residence of the veteran and spouse will be excluded from consideration as income if such payment was made after the death and prior to the close of the year succeeding the year of death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(14))

(1) *Unusual medical expenses.* Within the provisions of paragraphs (1)(1) through (4) of this section there will be excluded from the amount of the claimant's annual income any unreimbursed amounts which have been paid within the calendar year for unusual medical expenses regardless of the year the indebtedness was incurred. The term *unusual* means *excessive*. It does not describe the nature of a medical condition but rather the amount expended for medical treatment in relationship to the claimant's resources available for sustaining a reasonable mode of life. Unreimbursed expenditures which exceed 5 percent of the claimant's reported annual income will be considered unusual. Health, accident, sickness and hospitalization insurance premiums will be included as medical expenses in determining whether the claimant's unreimbursed medical expenses meet the criterion for *unusual*. A claimant's statement as to amounts expended for medical expenses ordinarily will be accepted unless the circumstances create doubt as to its credibility. An estimate based on a clear and reasonable expectation that unusual medical expenditure will be realized may be accepted for the purpose of authorizing prospective payments of benefits subject to necessary adjustment in the award upon receipt of an amended estimate or after the end of the calendar year upon receipt of an in-

come questionnaire. For the definition of what constitutes a medical expense, see § 3.278, Deductible medical expenses.

(1) *Veterans.* For the purpose of section 306 pension, there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by the veteran for unusual medical expenses of self, spouse, and other relatives of the veteran in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the veteran's household and whom the veteran has a moral or legal obligation to support.

(2) *Surviving spouses.* For the purpose of section 306 pension, there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by the surviving spouse for the unusual medical expenses of self, the veteran's children, and other relatives of the surviving spouse in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the surviving spouse's household and whom the surviving spouse has a moral or legal obligation to support.

(3) *Children.* For the purpose of section 306 pension, there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by a child for the unusual medical expenses of self, parent, and brothers and sisters of the child.

(4) *Parents.* For dependency and indemnity compensation purposes there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by the parent for the unusual medical expenses of self, spouse, and other relatives of the parent in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the parent's household and whom the parent has a moral or legal obligation to support. If the combined annual income of the parent and the parent's spouse is the basis for dependency and indemnity compensation, the exclusion is applicable to the combined annual income and extends to the unusual unreimbursed medical expenses of the spouse's relatives in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the household and whom the parent's spouse has a moral or legal obligation to support.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(f)(3); Sec. 306, Pub. L. 95-588; 92 Stat. 2508)

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(m) *Veteran's final expenses; pension.* In claims for pension under section 306, there will be excluded, as provided in paragraph (p) of this section:

(1) From the income of a surviving spouse, amounts equal to amounts paid for the expenses of the veteran's last illness;

(2) From the income of a surviving spouse, or of a child of a deceased veteran where there is no surviving spouse, amounts equal to amounts paid by the surviving spouse or child for the veteran's just debts, for the expenses of the veteran's last illness, and burial to the extent such expenses are not reimbursed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The term "just debts" does not include any debt that is secured by real or personal property.

(Authority: Sec. 306, Pub. L. 95-588; 92 Stat. 2508)

(n) *Final expenses of veteran's spouse or child; pension.* In claims for pension under section 306, there will be excluded, as provided in paragraph (p) of this section:

(1) From the income of a veteran, amounts equal to amounts paid by the veteran for the last illness and burial of the veteran's deceased spouse or child; and

(2) From the income of a spouse or surviving spouse, amounts equal to amounts paid by her as spouse or surviving spouse of the deceased veteran for the last illness and burial of a child of such veteran.

(Authority: Sec. 306, Pub. L. 95-588; 92 Stat. 2508)

(o) *Final expenses of veteran or parent's spouse; dependency and indemnity compensation.* In claims for dependency and indemnity compensation there will be excluded from the income of a parent, as provided in paragraph (p) of this section, amounts equal to amounts paid by the parent for:

(1) The expenses of the veteran's last illness and burial to the extent that such expenses are not reimbursed under 38 U.S.C. ch. 23.

(2) The parent's deceased spouse's just debts, the expenses of the spouse's last illness to the extent such expenses are not reimbursed under 38 U.S.C. ch. 51 and the expenses of the spouse's bur-

ial to the extent that such expenses are not reimbursed under 38 U.S.C. ch. 23 or 51. The term "just debts" does not include any debt that is secured by real or personal property.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(f))

(p) *Final expenses; year of exclusion.* For the purpose of paragraphs (m), (n) and (o) of this section, in the absence of contradictory information, the claimant's statement will be accepted as to the nature, amount and date of payment, and identity of the creditor. Except as provided in this paragraph, payments will be deducted from annual income for the year in which such payments are made. Payments made by a veteran, the spouse or surviving spouse of a veteran, child or, in dependency and indemnity compensation claims, by a parent during the calendar year following the year in which the veteran, spouse or child died may be deducted from the claimant's income for the year of last illness or burial if this deduction is advantageous to the claimant.

(q) *Volunteer programs—(1) Payments under Foster Grandparent Program and Older Americans Community Service Programs.* Effective May 3, 1973, compensation received under the Foster Grandparent Program and the Older Americans Community Service Programs will be excluded from income in claims for compensation, pension and dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: Pub. L. 93-29; 87 Stat. 55)

(2) *Payments under domestic volunteer service act programs.* Effective October 1, 1973, compensation or reimbursement received under a Domestic Volunteer Service Act Program (including Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), University Year for ACTION (UYA), Program for Local Services (PLS), ACTION Cooperative Volunteers (ACV), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Older American Community Service Program, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companion Program, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Active Corps of Executives (ACE), will be excluded

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from income in claims for compensation, pension and dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: Pub. L. 93-113; 87 Stat. 394)

(r) *Survivor benefit annuity.* For the purposes of old law pension and section 306 pension, there shall be excluded from computation of income annuity paid by the Department of Defense under the authority of section 653, Public Law 100-456 to qualified surviving spouses of veterans who died prior to November 1, 1953. (September 29, 1988)

(Authority: Sec. 653, Pub. L. 100-456; 102 Stat. 1991)

(s) *Reimbursement for casualty loss.* The following sources of reimbursements for casualty loss will not be considered as income in determining entitlement to benefits under the programs specified. Amounts to be excluded from computation in parents' dependency and indemnity compensation claims are limited to amounts of reimbursement which do not exceed the greater of the fair market value or the reasonable replacement cost of the property involved at the time immediately preceding the loss.

(1) Reimbursement for casualty loss of any kind in determining entitlement to parents' dependency and indemnity compensation benefits. For purposes of paragraph (t) of this section, the term "casualty loss" means the complete or partial destruction of property resulting from an identifiable event of a sudden, unexpected or unusual nature.

(2) Proceeds from fire insurance in determining dependency of a parent for compensation purposes or in determining entitlement to old-law and section 306 pension benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(f))

(t) *Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.* For the purposes of parents' dependency and indemnity compensation and dependency of parents under § 3.250, there shall be excluded from income computation payments under Section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2210 note)

(u) *Income tax returns.* VA will exclude from income payments from income tax returns. See § 3.279(d)(1).

(Authority: 26 U.S.C. 6409)

(v) *Statutory exclusions.* Other amounts excluded from income by statute. See § 3.279. VA will exclude from income any amount designated by statute as not countable as income, regardless of whether or not it is listed in this section or in § 3.279.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1395w-141(g)(6))

[28 FR 32, Jan. 1, 1963]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.262, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.263 Corpus of estate; net worth.

(a) *General.* The following rules are for application in determining the corpus of estate of a parent where dependency is a factor under § 3.250, and the net worth of a veteran, surviving spouse, or child where pension is subject to Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) under § 3.252(b). Only the estate of the parent, in claims based on dependency, or the estate of the veteran, surviving spouse, or child-claimant in claims for pension, will be considered. In the absence of contradictory information, the claimant's statement as to ownership and estimate of value will be accepted.

(b) *Definition.* *Corpus of estate and net worth* mean the market value, less mortgages or other encumbrances, of all real and personal property owned by the claimant except the claimant's dwelling (single-family unit) including a reasonable lot area, and personal effects suitable to and consistent with the claimant's reasonable mode of life.

(c) *Ownership.* See § 3.262(k).

(d) *Evaluation.* In determining whether some part of the claimant's estate should be consumed for his or her maintenance, consideration will be given to the amount of the claimant's income, together with the following factors: whether the property can be readily converted into cash at no substantial sacrifice; ability to dispose of property as limited by community property laws; life expectancy; number

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of dependents who meet the requirements of § 3.250(b)(2); potential rate of depletion, including unusual medical expenses under the principles outlined in § 3.262(1) for the claimant and his or her dependents.

(e) VA will exclude from the corpus of estate or net worth any amount designated by statute as not countable as a resource. See § 3.279.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1395w-141(g)(6))

[28 FR 33, Jan. 1, 1963, as amended at 39 FR 28527, Aug. 8, 1974; 44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979; 57 FR 59299, Dec. 15, 1992; 58 FR 33767, June 21, 1993; 62 FR 51279, Sept. 30, 1997; 67 FR 49587, July 31, 2002; 68 FR 60852, Oct. 24, 2003; 70 FR 15591, Mar. 28, 2005; 76 FR 4248, Jan. 25, 2011; 83 FR 47269, Sept. 18, 2018]

§ 3.270 Applicability of various dependency, income and estate regulations.

(a) *Sections 3.250 through 3.263 and 3.278 through 3.279.* These sections are applicable to dependency, income and estate determinations needed to determine entitlement or continued entitlement for the following programs:

- (1) Parents' death compensation.
- (2) Old-law pension.
- (3) Section 306 pension.
- (4) Parents' dependency and indemnity compensation.

NOTE: Citations to title 38 U.S.C. in §§ 3.250 through 3.263 and 3.278 through 3.279 referring to section 306 or old-law pension generally refer to provisions of law in effect on December 31, 1978.

(b) *Sections 3.271 through 3.279.* These sections apply to income and estate determinations of entitlement to the improved disability and death pension program which became effective January 1, 1979.

[44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 83 FR 47269, Sept. 18, 2018]

REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE IMPROVED PENSION PROGRAM WHICH BECAME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1979

SOURCE: 44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3.271 Computation of income.

(a) *General.* Payments of any kind from any source shall be counted as income during the 12-month annualization period in which received

unless specifically excluded under § 3.272.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) *Recurring income.* Recurring income means income which is received or anticipated in equal amounts and at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.), and which will continue throughout an entire 12-month annualization period. The amount of recurring income for pension purposes will be the amount received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period. Recurring income which terminates prior to being counted for at least one full 12-month annualization period will be treated as nonrecurring income for computation purposes.

(2) *Irregular income.* Irregular income means income which is received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period, but which is received in unequal amounts or at irregular intervals. The amount of irregular income for pension purposes will be the amount received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period following initial receipt of such income.

(3) *Nonrecurring income.* Nonrecurring income means income received or anticipated on a one-time basis during a 12-month annualization period (e.g., an inheritance). Pension computations of income will include nonrecurring income for a full 12-month annualization period following receipt of the income.

(b) *Salary.* Salary means the gross amount of a person's earnings or wages before any deductions are made for such things as taxes, insurance, retirement plans, social security, etc.

(c) *Business, farm or professional income.* (1) This includes gross income from a business, farm or profession as reduced by the necessary operating expenses such as cost of goods sold, or expenditures for rent, taxes, and upkeep, or costs of repairs or replacements. The value of an increase in stock inventory of a business is not considered income.

(2) Depreciation is not a deductible expense.

(3) A loss sustained in operating a business, profession, farm, or from investments, may not be deducted from income derived from any other source.

(d) *Income from property.* Income from real or personal property is countable

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as income of the property's owner. The terms of a recorded deed or other evidence of title shall constitute evidence of ownership. This includes property acquired through purchase, gift, devise, or descent. If property is owned jointly, income of the various owners shall be determined in proportion to shares of ownership of the property. The owner's shares of income held in partnership shall be determined on the basis of the facts found.

(e) *Installments.* Income shall be determined by the total amount received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(f) *Deferred determinations.* (1) When an individual is unable to predict with certainty the amount of countable annual income, the annual rate of improved pension shall be reduced by the greatest amount of anticipated countable income until the end of the 12-month annualization period, when total income received during that period will be determined and adjustments in pension payable made accordingly.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) When a claimed dependent is shown to have income which exceeds the additional amount of benefits payable based on the claimed dependency, but evidence requirements of § 3.204, § 3.205, § 3.209, or § 3.210 have not been met, the maximum annual rate of improved pension shall be determined without consideration of the claimed dependency. This amount shall be reduced by an amount which includes the income of the unestablished dependent. Adjustments in computation of the maximum annual rate of improved pension shall occur following receipt of evidence necessary to establish the dependency.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(g) *Compensation (civilian) for injury or death.* Compensation paid by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Social Security Administration, or the Railroad Retirement Board, or pursuant to any worker's

compensation or employer's liability statute, or damages collected because of personal injury or death, will be considered income as received. However, medical, legal or other expenses incident to the injury or death, or incident to the collection or recovery of the amount of the award or settlement, may be deducted. The criteria in § 3.272(g) apply as to all medical expenditures after the award or settlement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(h) *Fractions of dollars.* Fractions of dollars will be disregarded in computing annual income.

(i) *Waiver of receipt of income.* Potential income that is not excludable under § 3.272 or § 3.279 but is waived by an individual is included as countable income of the individual. However, if an individual withdraws a claim for Social Security benefits, after a finding of entitlement to those benefits, in order to maintain eligibility for unreduced Social Security benefits upon reaching a particular age, VA will not regard this potential income as having been waived and will therefore not count it.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503 (a)).

[44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 53 FR 23235, June 21, 1988; 57 FR 59299, Dec. 15, 1992; 83 FR 47269, Sept. 18, 2018]

§ 3.272 Exclusions from income.

The following shall be excluded from countable income for the purpose of determining entitlement to improved pension. Unless otherwise provided, expenses deductible under this section are deductible only during the 12-month annualization period in which they were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(a) *Welfare.* Donations from public or private relief, welfare, or charitable organizations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(1))

(b) *Maintenance.* The value of maintenance furnished by a relative, friend, or

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a charitable organization (civic or governmental) will not be considered income. Where the individual is maintained in a rest home or other community institution or facility, public or private, because of impaired health or advanced age, money paid to the home or the individual to cover the cost of maintenance will not be considered income, regardless of whether it is furnished by a relative, friend, or charitable organization. The expense of maintenance is not deductible if it is paid from the individual's income.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1503(a)(1))

(c) *Department of Veterans Affairs pension benefits.* Payments under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, including accrued pension benefits payable under 38 U.S.C. 5121.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(2))

(d) *Reimbursement for casualty loss.* Reimbursement of any kind for any casualty loss. The amount to be excluded is not to exceed the greater of the fair market value or the reasonable replacement cost of the property involved at the time immediately preceding the loss. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "casualty loss" means the complete or partial destruction of property resulting from an identifiable event of a sudden, unexpected or unusual nature.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(5))

(e) *Profit from sale of property.* Profit realized from the disposition of real or personal property other than in the course of business, except amounts received in excess of the sales price, for example, interest on deferred sales is included as income. In installment sales, any payments received until the sales price is recovered are not included as income, but any amounts received which exceed the sales price are included, regardless of whether they represent principal or interest.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(6))

(f) *Joint accounts.* Amounts in joint accounts in banks and similar institu-

tions acquired by reason of death of the other joint owner.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(7))

(g) *Medical expenses.* Within the provisions of the following paragraphs, there will be excluded from the amount of an individual's annual income any unreimbursed amounts which have been paid within the 12-month annualization period for medical expenses regardless of when the indebtedness was incurred. An estimate based on a clear and reasonable expectation that unusual medical expenditure will be realized may be accepted for the purpose of authorizing prospective payments of benefits subject to necessary adjustment in the award upon receipt of an amended estimate, or after the end of the 12-month annualization period upon receipt of an eligibility verification report. For the definition of what constitutes a medical expense, see § 3.278, Deductible medical expenses.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) *Veteran's income.* Unreimbursed medical expenses will be excluded when all of the following requirements are met:

(i) They were or will be paid by a veteran or spouse for medical expenses of the veteran, spouse, children, parents and other relatives for whom there is a moral or legal obligation of support;

(ii) They were or will be incurred on behalf of a person who is a member or a constructive member of the veteran's or spouse's household; and

(iii) They were or will be in excess of 5 percent of the applicable maximum annual pension rate or rates for the veteran (including increased pension for family members but excluding increased pension because of need for aid and attendance or being housebound) as in effect during the 12-month annualization period in which the medical expenses were paid.

(2) *Surviving spouse's income.* Unreimbursed medical expenses will be excluded when all of the following requirements are met:

(i) They were or will be paid by a surviving spouse for medical expenses of the spouse, veteran's children, parents

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and other relatives for whom there is a moral or legal obligation of support;

(ii) They were or will be incurred on behalf of a person who is a member or a constructive member of the spouse's household; and

(iii) They were or will be in excess of 5 percent of the applicable maximum annual pension rate or rates for the spouse (including increased pension for family members but excluding increased pension because of need for aid and attendance or being housebound) as in effect during the 12-month annualization period in which the medical expenses were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) *Children's income.* Unreimbursed amounts paid by a child for medical expenses of self, parent, brothers and sisters, to the extent that such amounts exceed 5 percent of the maximum annual pension rate or rates payable to the child during the 12-month annualization period in which the medical expenses were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(h) *Expenses of last illnesses, burials, and just debts.* Expenses specified in paragraphs (h)(1) and (h)(2) of this section which are paid during the calendar year following that in which death occurred may be deducted from annual income for the 12-month annualization period in which they were paid or from annual income for any 12-month annualization period which begins during the calendar year of death, whichever is to the claimant's advantage. Otherwise, such expenses are deductible only for the 12-month annualization period in which they were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) *Veteran's final expenses.* (i) Amounts paid by a spouse before a veteran's death for expenses of the veteran's last illness will be deducted from the income of the surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(3))

(ii) Amounts paid by a surviving spouse or child of a veteran for the veteran's just debts, expenses of last ill-

ness and burial (to the extent such burial expenses are not reimbursed under chapter 23 of title 38 U.S.C.) will be deducted from the income of the surviving spouse or child. The term "just debts" does not include any debt that is secured by real or personal property.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(3))

(2) *Spouse or child's final expenses.* (i) Amounts paid by a veteran for the expenses of the last illness and burial of the veteran's deceased spouse or child will be deducted from the veteran's income.

(ii) Amounts paid by a veteran's spouse or surviving spouse for expenses of the last illness and burial of the veteran's child will be deducted from the spouse's or surviving spouse's income.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(4))

(i) *Educational expenses.* Amounts equal to expenses paid by a veteran or surviving spouse pursuing a course of education or vocational rehabilitation or training, to include amounts paid for tuition, fees, books, and materials, and in the case of a veteran or surviving spouse in need of regular aid and attendance, unreimbursed amounts paid for unusual transportation expenses in connection with the pursuit of such course. Unusual transportation expenses are those exceeding the reasonable expenses which would have been incurred by a nondisabled person using an appropriate means of transportation (public transportation, if reasonably available).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(9))

(j) *Child's income.* In the case of a child, any current work income received during the year, to the extent that the total amount of such income does not exceed an amount equal to the sum of the following:

(1) The lowest amount of gross income for which a Federal income tax return must be filed, as specified in section 6012(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, by an individual who is not married (as determined under section 143 of such Code), and is not a surviving spouse (as defined in section 2(a) of such Code), and is not a head of

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household (as defined in section 2(b) of such Code); and

(2) If the child is pursuing a course of postsecondary education or vocational rehabilitation or training, the amount paid by the child for those educational expenses including the amount paid for tuition, fees, books, and materials.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(10))

(k) *Veterans' benefits from States and municipalities.* VA will exclude from income payments from a State or municipality to a veteran of a monetary benefit that is paid as a veterans' benefit due to injury or disease. VA will exclude up to \$5,000 of such benefit in any annualization period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(11))

(1) *Distributions of funds under 38 U.S.C. 1718.* Distributions from the Department of Veterans Affairs Special Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Activities Fund as a result of participation in a therapeutic or rehabilitation activity under 38 U.S.C. 1718 and payments from participation in a program of rehabilitative services provided as part of the care furnished by a State home and which is approved by VA as conforming to standards for activities under 38 U.S.C. 1718 shall be considered donations from a public or private relief or welfare organization and shall not be countable as income for pension purposes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1718(f))

(m) *Hardship exclusion of child's available income.* When hardship is established under the provisions of § 3.23(d)(6) of this part, there shall be excluded from the available income of any child or children an amount equal to the amount by which annual expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance exceed the sum of countable annual income plus VA pension entitlement computed without consideration of this exclusion. The amount of this exclusion shall not exceed the available income of any child or children, and annual expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance shall not include any expenses which were considered in determining the available income of the child or chil-

dren or the countable annual income of the veteran or surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(h), 1541(g))

(n) *Survivor benefit annuity.* Annuity paid by the Department of Defense under the authority of section 653, Public Law 100-456 to qualified surviving spouses of veterans who died prior to November 1, 1953. (September 29, 1988)

(Authority: Sec. 653, Pub. L. 100-456; 102 Stat. 1991)

(o) *Cash surrender value of life insurance.* That portion of proceeds from the cash surrender of a life insurance policy which represents a return of insurance premiums.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(p) *Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.* Any payment made under Section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2210 note)

(q) *Life insurance proceeds.* Lump-sum proceeds of any life insurance policy on a veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(12))

(r) *Income tax returns.* VA will exclude from income payments from income tax returns. See § 3.279(e)(1).

(Authority: 26 U.S.C. 6409)

(s) *Reimbursements for loss.* VA will exclude from income payments described in 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(5).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(5))

(t) *Statutory exclusions.* Other amounts excluded from income by statute. See § 3.279. VA will exclude from income any amount designated by statute as not countable as income, regardless of whether or not it is listed in this section or in § 3.279.

[44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.272, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.273 Rate computation.

The commencement date of change in benefit payments based on rate computations under the provisions of this section will be determined under the provisions of § 3.31 or § 3.660.

(a) *Initial award.* For the purpose of determining initial entitlement, or for resuming payments on an award which was previously discontinued, the monthly rate of pension payable to a beneficiary shall be computed by reducing the beneficiary's applicable maximum pension rate by the beneficiary's countable income on the effective date of entitlement and dividing the remainder by 12. Effective June 1, 1983, the provisions of § 3.29(b) apply to this paragraph. Recomputation of rates due to changes in the maximum annual pension rate or rate of income following the initial date of entitlement are subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Running awards—(1) Change in maximum annual pension rate.* Whenever there is change in a beneficiary's applicable maximum annual pension rate, the monthly rate of pension payable shall be computed by reducing the new applicable maximum annual pension rate by the beneficiary's countable income on the effective date of the change in the applicable maximum annual pension rate, and dividing the remainder by 12. Effective June 1, 1983, the provisions of § 3.29(b) apply to this paragraph.

(2) *Change in amount of income.* Whenever there is a change in a beneficiary's amount of countable income the monthly rate of pension payable shall be computed by reducing the beneficiary's applicable maximum annual pension rate by the beneficiary's new amount of countable income on the effective date of the change in the amount of income, and dividing the remainder by 12. Effective June 1, 1983, the provisions of § 3.29(b) apply to this paragraph.

(c) *Nonrecurring income.* The amount of any nonrecurring countable income (e.g. an inheritance) received by a beneficiary shall be added to the beneficiary's annual rate of income for a 12-month annualization period com-

mencing on the effective date on which the nonrecurring income is countable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(d) *Recurring and irregular income.* The amount of recurring and irregular income anticipated or received by a beneficiary shall be added to determine the beneficiary's annual rate of income for a 12-month annualization period commencing at the beginning of the 12-month annualization, subject to the provisions of § 3.660(a)(2) of this chapter.

[44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 48 FR 34472, July 29, 1983; 57 FR 59300, Dec. 15, 1992]

§ 3.274 Net worth and VA pension.

(a) *Net worth limit.* For purposes of entitlement to VA pension, the net worth limit effective October 18, 2018 is \$123,600. This limit will be increased by the same percentage as the Social Security increase whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)). VA will publish the current limit on its website at www.benefits.va.gov/pension/.

(b) *When a claimant's or beneficiary's net worth exceeds the limit.* Except as provided in paragraph (h)(2) of this section, VA will deny or discontinue pension if a claimant's or beneficiary's net worth exceeds the net worth limit in paragraph (a) of this section.

(1) *Net worth.* Net worth means the sum of a claimant's or beneficiary's assets and annual income.

(2) *Asset calculation.* VA will calculate a claimant's or beneficiary's assets under this section and § 3.275.

(3) *Annual income calculation.* VA will calculate a claimant's or beneficiary's annual income under § 3.271, and will include the annual income of dependents as required by law. See §§ 3.23(d)(4), 3.23(d)(5), and 3.24 for more information on annual income included when VA calculates a claimant's or beneficiary's pension entitlement rate. In calculating annual income for this purpose, VA will subtract all applicable deductible expenses, to include appropriate prospective medical expenses under § 3.272(g).

(4) *Example of net worth calculation.* For purposes of this example, presume the net worth limit is \$123,600. A claimant's assets total \$117,000 and annual income is \$9,000. Therefore, adding the claimant's annual income to assets produces net worth of \$126,000. This amount exceeds the net worth limit.

(c) *Assets of other individuals included as claimant's or beneficiary's assets—*(1) *Claimant or beneficiary is a veteran.* A veteran's assets include the assets of the veteran as well as the assets of his or her spouse, if the veteran has a spouse.

(2) *Claimant or beneficiary is a surviving spouse.* A surviving spouse's assets include only the assets of the surviving spouse.

(3) *Claimant or beneficiary is a surviving child.* (i) If a surviving child has no custodian or is in the custody of an institution, the child's assets include only the assets of the child.

(ii) If a surviving child has a custodian other than an institution, the child's assets include the assets of the child as well as the assets of the custodian. If the child is in the joint custody of his or her natural or adoptive parent and a stepparent, the child's assets also include the assets of the stepparent. See § 3.57(d) for more information on child custody for pension purposes.

(d) *How a child's net worth affects a veteran's or surviving spouse's pension entitlement.* VA will not consider a child to be a veteran's or surviving spouse's dependent child for pension purposes if the child's net worth exceeds the net worth limit in paragraph (a) of this section.

(1) *Dependent child and potential dependent child.* For the purposes of this section—

(i) "Dependent child" refers to a child for whom a veteran or a surviving spouse is entitled to an increased maximum annual pension rate.

(ii) "Potential dependent child" refers to a child who is excluded from a veteran's or surviving spouse's pension award solely or partly because of this paragraph (d). References in this section to "dependent child" include a potential dependent child.

(2) *Dependent child net worth.* A dependent child's net worth is the sum of

his or her annual income and the value of his or her assets.

(3) *Dependent child asset calculation.* VA will calculate the value of a dependent child's assets under this section and § 3.275. A dependent child's assets include the child's assets only.

(4) *Dependent child annual income calculation.* VA will calculate a dependent child's annual income under § 3.271, and will include the annual income of the child as well as the annual income of the veteran or surviving spouse that would be included if VA were calculating a pension entitlement rate for the veteran or surviving spouse.

(e) *When VA calculates net worth.* VA calculates net worth only when:

(1) VA has received—

(i) An original pension claim;

(ii) A new pension claim after a period of non-entitlement;

(iii) A request to establish a new dependent; or

(iv) Information that a veteran's, surviving spouse's, or child's net worth has increased or decreased; and

(2) The claimant or beneficiary meets the other factors necessary for pension entitlement as provided in § 3.3(a)(3) and (b)(4).

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (e): If the evidence shows that net worth exceeds the net worth limit, VA may decide the pension claim before determining if the claimant meets other entitlement factors. VA will notify the claimant of the entitlement factors that have not been established.

(f) *How net worth decreases.* Net worth may decrease in three ways: Assets can decrease, annual income can decrease, or both assets and annual income can decrease.

(1) *How assets decrease.* A veteran, surviving spouse, or child, or someone acting on their behalf, may decrease assets by spending them on any item or service for which fair market value is received unless the item or items purchased are themselves part of net worth. See § 3.276(a)(4) for the definition of "fair market value." The expenses must be those of the veteran, surviving spouse, or child, or a relative of the veteran, surviving spouse, or child. The relative must be a member or constructive member of the veteran's, surviving spouse's, or child's household.

(2) *How annual income decreases.* See §§ 3.271 through 3.273.

(3) *Example 1.* For purposes of this example, presume the net worth limit is \$123,600 and the maximum annual pension rate (MAPR) is \$12,000. A claimant has assets of \$115,000 and annual income of \$9,000. Adding annual income to assets produces a net worth of \$124,000, which exceeds the net worth limit. However, the claimant is a patient in a nursing home and pays annual unreimbursed nursing home fees of \$29,000. Reasonably predictable unreimbursed medical expenses are deductible from annual income under § 3.272(g) to the extent that they exceed 5 percent of the applicable MAPR. VA subtracts the projected expenditures that exceed 5 percent of the applicable MAPR (here, \$28,400) from annual income, which decreases annual income to zero. The claimant's net worth is now \$115,000; therefore, net worth is within the limit to qualify for VA pension.

(4) *Example 2.* For purposes of this example, presume the net worth limit is \$123,600 and the MAPR is \$12,000. A claimant has assets of \$123,000 and annual income of \$9,500. Adding annual income to assets produces a net worth of \$132,500, which exceeds the net worth limit. The claimant pays reasonably predictable annual unreimbursed medical expenses of \$9,000. Unreimbursed medical expenses are deductible from annual income under § 3.272(g) to the extent that they exceed 5 percent of the applicable MAPR. VA subtracts the projected expenditures that exceed 5 percent of the applicable MAPR (here, \$8,400) from annual income, which decreases annual income to \$1,100. This decreases net worth to \$124,100, which is still over the limit. VA must deny the claim for excessive net worth.

(g) *Effective dates of pension entitlement or increased entitlement after a denial, reduction, or discontinuance based on excessive net worth—(1) Scope of paragraph.* This paragraph (g) applies when VA has:

(i) Discontinued pension or denied pension entitlement for a veteran, surviving spouse, or surviving child based on the veteran's, surviving spouse's, or surviving child's excessive net worth; or

(ii) Reduced pension or denied increased pension entitlement for a veteran or surviving spouse based on a dependent child's excessive net worth.

(2) *Effective date of entitlement or increased entitlement.* The effective date of entitlement or increased entitlement is the day net worth ceases to exceed the limit. For this effective date to apply, the claimant or beneficiary must submit a certified statement that net worth has decreased and VA must receive the certified statement before the pension claim has become finally adjudicated under § 3.160. This means that VA must receive the certified statement within 1 year after its decision notice to the claimant concerning the denial, reduction, or discontinuance unless the claimant appeals VA's decision. Otherwise, the effective date is the date VA receives a new pension claim. In accordance with § 3.277(a), VA may require the claimant or beneficiary to submit additional evidence as the individual circumstances may require.

(h) *Reduction or discontinuance of beneficiary's pension entitlement based on excessive net worth—(1) Effective date of reduction or discontinuance.* When an increase in a beneficiary's or dependent child's net worth results in a pension reduction or discontinuance because net worth exceeds the limit, the effective date of reduction or discontinuance is the last day of the calendar year in which net worth exceeds the limit.

(2) *Net worth decreases before the effective date.* If net worth decreases to the limit or below the limit before the effective date provided in paragraph (h)(1) of this section, VA will not reduce or discontinue the pension award on the basis of excessive net worth.

(i) *Additional effective-date provisions for dependent children—(1) Establishing a dependent child on veteran's or surviving spouse's pension award results in increased pension entitlement.* When establishing a dependent child on a veteran's or surviving spouse's pension award results in increased pension entitlement for the veteran or surviving spouse, VA will apply the effective-date provisions in paragraphs (g) and (h) of this section.

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(2) *Establishing a dependent child on veteran's or surviving spouse's pension award results in decreased pension entitlement.* (i) When a dependent child's non-excessive net worth results in decreased pension entitlement for the veteran or surviving spouse, the effective date of the decreased pension entitlement rate (*i.e.*, VA action to add the child to the award) is the end of the year that the child's net worth decreases.

(ii) When a dependent child's excessive net worth results in increased pension entitlement for the veteran or surviving spouse, the effective date of the increased pension entitlement rate (*i.e.*, VA action to remove the child from the award) is the date that VA receives a claim for an increased rate based on the child's net worth increase.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1522, 1543, 5110, 5112)

[83 FR 47269, Sept 18, 2018]

§ 3.275 How VA determines the asset amount for pension net worth determinations.

(a) *Definitions pertaining to assets*—(1) *Assets.* The term *assets* means the fair market value of all property that an individual owns, including all real and personal property, unless excluded under paragraph (b) of this section, less the amount of mortgages or other encumbrances specific to the mortgaged or encumbered property. VA will consider the terms of the recorded deed or other evidence of title to be proof of ownership of a particular asset. *See also* § 3.276(a)(4), which defines “fair market value.”

(2) *Claimant.* (i) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section, for the purposes of this section and § 3.276, *claimant* means a pension beneficiary, a dependent spouse, or a dependent or potential dependent child as described in § 3.274(d), as well as a veteran, surviving spouse, or surviving child pension applicant.

(ii) For the purpose of paragraph (b)(1) of this section, *claimant* means a pension beneficiary or applicant who is a veteran, a surviving spouse, or a surviving child.

(3) *Residential lot area.* For purposes of this section, *residential lot area* means the lot on which a residence sits that does not exceed 2 acres (87,120

square feet), unless the additional acreage is not marketable.

(b) *Exclusions from assets.* Assets do not include the following:

(1) *Primary residence.* The value of a claimant's primary residence (single-family unit), including the residential lot area, in which the claimant has an ownership interest. VA recognizes one primary residence per claimant. If the residence is sold after pension entitlement is established, any net proceeds from the sale is an asset except to the extent the proceeds are used to purchase another residence within the same calendar year as the year in which the sale occurred.

(i) *Personal mortgage not deductible.* VA will not subtract from a claimant's assets the amount of any mortgages or encumbrances on a claimant's primary residence.

(ii) *Claimant not residing in primary residence.* Although rental income counts as annual income as provided in § 3.271(d), VA will not include a claimant's primary residence as an asset even if the claimant resides in any of the following as defined in § 3.278(b):

(A) A nursing home or medical foster home;

(B) A care facility other than a nursing home; or

(C) The home of a family member for health care or custodial care.

(2) *Personal effects.* Value of personal effects suitable to and consistent with a reasonable mode of life, such as appliances and family transportation vehicles.

(3) *Radiation Exposure Compensation Act payments.* Payments made under section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2210 (note))

(4) *Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Fund payments.* Payments made under section 103(c) and excluded under section 103(h)(2) of the Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Fund Act of 1998.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 300c–22 (note))

(5) *Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program payments.*

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Payments made under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7385e(2))

(6) *Payments to Aleuts.* Payments made to certain Aleuts under 50 U.S.C. App. 1989c-5.

(Authority: 50 U.S.C. App. 1989c-5(d)(2))

(7) *Statutory exclusions.* Other amounts excluded from assets by statute. See § 3.279. VA will exclude from assets any amount designated by statute as not countable as a resource, regardless of whether or not it is listed in this section or in § 3.279.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1522, 1543)

[83 FR 47271, Sept. 18, 2018]

§ 3.276 Asset transfers and penalty periods.

(a) *Asset transfer definitions.* For purposes of this section—

(1) *Claimant* has the same meaning as defined in § 3.275(a)(2)(i).

(2) *Covered asset* means an asset that—

(i) Was part of a claimant's net worth;

(ii) Was transferred for less than fair market value; and

(iii) If not transferred, would have caused or partially caused the claimant's net worth to exceed the net worth limit under § 3.274(a).

(3) *Covered asset amount* means the monetary amount by which a claimant's net worth would have exceeded the limit due to the covered asset alone if the uncompensated value of the covered asset had been included in net worth.

(i) *Example 1.* For purposes of this example, presume the net worth limit under § 3.274(a) is \$123,600. A claimant's assets total \$115,900 and his annual income is zero. However, the claimant transferred \$30,000 by giving it to a friend. If the claimant had not transferred the \$30,000, his net worth would have been \$145,900, which exceeds the net worth limit. The claimant's covered asset amount is \$22,300, because this is the amount by which the claimant's net worth would have exceeded the limit due to the covered asset.

(ii) *Example 2.* For purposes of this example, presume the net worth limit under § 3.274(a) is \$123,600. A claimant's annual income is zero and her total assets are \$125,000, which exceeds the net worth limit. In addition, the claimant transferred \$30,000 by giving \$20,000 to her married son and giving \$10,000 to a friend. The claimant's covered asset amount is \$30,000 because this is the amount by which the claimant's net worth would have exceeded the limit due to the covered assets alone.

(4) *Fair market value* means the price at which an asset would change hands between a willing buyer and a willing seller, neither being under any compulsion to buy or to sell and both having reasonable knowledge of relevant facts. VA will use the best available information to determine fair market value, such as inspections, appraisals, public records, and the market value of similar property if applicable.

(5) *Transfer for less than fair market value* means—

(i) Selling, conveying, gifting, or exchanging an asset for an amount less than the fair market value of the asset; or

(ii) A voluntary asset transfer to, or purchase of, any financial instrument or investment that reduces net worth by transferring the asset to, or purchasing, the instrument or investment unless the claimant establishes that he or she has the ability to liquidate the entire balance of the asset for the claimant's own benefit. If the claimant establishes that the asset can be liquidated, the asset is included as net worth. Examples of such instruments or investments include—

(A) *Annuities.* *Annuity* means a financial instrument that provides income over a defined period of time for an initial payment of principal.

(B) *Trusts.* *Trust* means a legal instrument by which an individual (the grantor) transfers property to an individual or an entity (the trustee), who manages the property according to the terms of the trust, whether for the grantor's own benefit or for the benefit of another individual.

(6) *Uncompensated value* means the difference between the fair market value of an asset and the amount of compensation an individual receives

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for it. In the case of a trust, annuity, or other financial instrument or investment described in paragraph (a)(5)(ii) of this section, *uncompensated value* means the amount of money or the monetary value of any other type of asset transferred to such a trust, annuity, or other financial instrument or investment.

(7) *Look-back period* means the 36-month period immediately preceding the date on which VA receives either an original pension claim or a new pension claim after a period of non-entitlement. This definition does not include any date before October 18, 2018.

(8) *Penalty period* means a period of non-entitlement, calculated under paragraph (e) of this section, due to transfer of a covered asset.

(b) *General statement of policy pertaining to pension and covered assets.* VA pension is a needs-based benefit and is not intended to preserve the estates of individuals who have the means to support themselves. Accordingly, a claimant may not create pension entitlement by transferring covered assets. VA will review the terms and conditions of asset transfers made during the 36-month look-back period to determine whether the transfer constituted transfer of a covered asset. However, VA will disregard asset transfers made before October 18, 2018. In accordance with §3.277(a), for any asset transfer, VA may require a claimant to provide evidence such as a Federal income tax return transcript, the terms of a gift, trust, or annuity, or the terms of a recorded deed or other evidence of title.

(c) *Exception for transfers as a result of fraud or unfair business practice.* An asset transferred as the result of fraud, misrepresentation, or unfair business practice related to the sale or marketing of financial products or services for purposes of establishing entitlement to VA pension will not be considered a covered asset. Evidence supporting this exception may include, but is not limited to, a complaint contemporaneously filed with State, local, or Federal authorities reporting the incident.

(d) *Exception for transfers to certain trusts.* VA will not consider as a covered asset an asset that a veteran, a

veteran's spouse, or a veteran's surviving spouse transfers to a trust established on behalf of a child of the veteran if:

(1) VA rates or has rated the child incapable of self-support under §3.356; and

(2) There is no circumstance under which distributions from the trust can be used to benefit the veteran, the veteran's spouse, or the veteran's surviving spouse.

(e) *Penalty periods and calculations.* When a claimant transfers a covered asset during the look-back period, VA will assess a penalty period not to exceed 5 years. VA will calculate the length of the penalty period by dividing the total covered asset amount by the monthly penalty rate described in paragraph (e)(1) of this section and rounding the quotient down to the nearest whole number. The result is the number of months for which VA will not pay pension.

(1) *Monthly penalty rate.* The monthly penalty rate is the maximum annual pension rate (MAPR) under 38 U.S.C. 1521(d)(2) for a veteran in need of aid and attendance with one dependent that is in effect as of the date of the pension claim, divided by 12, and rounded down to the nearest whole dollar. The monthly penalty rate is located on VA's website at www.benefits.va.gov/pension.

(2) *Beginning date of penalty period.* When a claimant transfers a covered asset or assets during the look-back period, the penalty period begins on the first day of the month that follows the date of the transfer. If there was more than one transfer, the penalty period will begin on the first day of the month that follows the date of the last transfer.

(3) *Entitlement upon ending of penalty period.* VA will consider that the claimant, if otherwise qualified, is entitled to benefits effective the last day of the last month of the penalty period, with a payment date as of the first day of the following month in accordance with §3.31.

(4) *Example of penalty period calculation.* VA receives a pension claim in November 2018. The claimant's net worth is equal to the net worth limit.

However, the claimant transferred covered assets totaling \$10,000 on August 20, 2018, and September 23, 2018. Therefore, the total covered asset amount is \$10,000, and the penalty period begins on October 1, 2018. Assume the MAPR for a veteran in need of aid and attendance with one dependent in effect in November 2018 is \$24,000. The monthly penalty rate is \$2,000. The penalty period is \$10,000/\$2,000 per month = 5 months. The fifth month of the penalty period is February 2019. The claimant may be entitled to pension effective February 28, 2019, with a payment date of March 1, 2019, if other entitlement requirements are met.

(5) *Penalty period recalculations.* VA will not recalculate a penalty period under this section unless—

(i) The original calculation is shown to be erroneous; or

(ii) VA receives evidence showing that some or all covered assets were returned to the claimant before the date of claim or within 60 days after the date of VA's notice to the claimant of VA's decision concerning the penalty period. If covered assets are returned to the claimant, VA will recalculate or eliminate the penalty period. For this exception to apply, VA must receive the evidence not later than 90 days after the date of VA's notice to the claimant of VA's decision concerning the penalty period. Once covered assets are returned, a claimant may reduce net worth at the time of transfer under the provisions of §3.274(f).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1522, 1543, 1506(1))

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirement in this section under control numbers 2900-0002, and 2900-0004.)

[83 FR 47271, Sept. 18, 2018]

§3.277 Eligibility reporting requirements.

(a) *Evidence of entitlement.* As a condition of granting or continuing pension, the Department of Veterans Affairs may require from any person who is an applicant for or a recipient of pension such information, proofs, and evidence as is necessary to determine the annual income and the value of the corpus of the estate of such person, and of any spouse or child for whom the person is

receiving or is to receive increased pension (such child is hereinafter in this section referred to as a *dependent child*), and, in the case of a child applying for or in receipt of pension in his or her own behalf (hereinafter in this section referred to as a *surviving child*), of any person with whom such child is residing who is legally responsible for such child's support.

(b) *Obligation to report changes in factors affecting entitlement.* Any individual who has applied for or receives pension must promptly notify the Secretary of any change affecting entitlement in any of the following:

- (1) Income;
- (2) Net worth or corpus of estate;
- (3) Marital status;
- (4) Nursing home patient status;
- (5) School enrollment status of a child 18 years of age or older; or

(6) Any other factor that affects entitlement to benefits under the provisions of this Part.

(c) *Eligibility verification reports.* (1) For purposes of this section the term eligibility verification report means a form prescribed by the Secretary that is used to request income, net worth, dependency status, and any other information necessary to determine or verify entitlement to pension.

(2) The Secretary may require an eligibility verification report under the following circumstances:

(i) If the Social Security Administration has not verified the beneficiary's Social Security number and, if the beneficiary is married, his or her spouse's Social Security number;

(ii) If there is reason to believe that the beneficiary or his or her spouse may have received income other than Social Security during the current or previous calendar year; or

(iii) If the Secretary determines that an eligibility verification report is necessary to preserve program integrity.

(3) An individual who applies for or receives pension as defined in §3.3 of this part shall, as a condition of receipt or continued receipt of benefits, furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs an eligibility verification report upon request.

(d) If VA requests that a claimant or beneficiary submit an eligibility verification report but he or she fails

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to do so within 60 days of the date of the VA request, the Secretary shall suspend the award or disallow the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1506)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control numbers 2900–0101 and 2900–0624)

[44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 60 FR 51922, Oct. 4, 1995; 65 FR 16827, Mar. 30, 2000; 66 FR 56614, Nov. 9, 2001; 83 FR 47272, Sept. 18, 2018]

§ 3.278 Deductible medical expenses.

(a) *Scope.* This section identifies medical expenses that VA may deduct from countable income for purposes of three of its needs-based programs: Pension, section 306 pension, and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC). Payments for such medical expenses must be unreimbursed to be deductible from income.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section—

(1) *Health care provider* means:

(i) An individual licensed by a State or country to provide health care in the State or country in which the individual provides the health care. The term includes, but is not limited to, a physician, physician assistant, psychologist, chiropractor, registered nurse, licensed vocational nurse, licensed practical nurse, and physical or occupational therapist; or

(ii) A nursing assistant or home health aide who is supervised by a licensed health care provider as defined in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section.

(2) *Activities of daily living (ADLs)* mean basic self-care activities and consist of bathing or showering, dressing, eating, toileting, transferring, and ambulating within the home or living area. *Transferring* means an individual's moving himself or herself from one position to another, such as getting in and out of bed.

(3) *Instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs)* mean independent living activities, such as shopping, food preparation, housekeeping, laundering, managing finances, handling medications, using the telephone, and transportation for non-medical purposes.

(4) *Custodial care* means regular:

(i) Assistance with two or more ADLs; or

(ii) Supervision because an individual with a physical, mental, developmental, or cognitive disorder requires care or assistance on a regular basis to protect the individual from hazards or dangers incident to his or her daily environment.

(5) *Nursing home* means a facility defined in § 3.1(z)(1) or (2). If the facility is not located in a State, the facility must be licensed in the country in which it is located.

(6) *Medical foster home* means a privately-owned residence, recognized and approved by VA under 38 CFR 17.73(d), that offers a non-institutional alternative to nursing home care for veterans who are unable to live alone safely due to chronic or terminal illness.

(7) *Care facility other than a nursing home* means a facility in which a disabled individual receives health care or custodial care under the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section. A facility must be licensed if facilities of that type are required to be licensed in the State or country in which the facility is located. A facility that is residential must be staffed 24 hours per day with care providers. The providers do not have to be licensed health care providers.

(8) *Needs A&A or is housebound* refers to a disabled individual who meets the criteria in § 3.351 for needing regular aid and attendance (A&A) or being housebound and is a:

(i) Veteran;

(ii) Surviving spouse;

(iii) Parent (for parents' DIC purposes); or

(iv) Spouse of a living veteran with a service-connected disability rated at least 30 percent disabling, who is receiving pension.

(c) *Medical expenses for VA purposes.* Generally, medical expenses for VA needs-based benefit purposes are payments for items or services that are medically necessary; that improve a disabled individual's functioning; or that prevent, slow, or ease an individual's functional decline. Medical expenses may include, but are not limited to, the payments specified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (7) of this section.

(1) *Care by a health care provider.* Payments to a health care provider for services performed within the scope of the provider's professional capacity are medical expenses. Cosmetic procedures that a health care provider performs to improve a congenital or accidental deformity or related to treatment for a diagnosed medical condition are medical expenses.

(2) *Medications, medical supplies, medical equipment, and medical food, vitamins, and supplements.* Payments for prescription and non-prescription medication procured lawfully under Federal law, as well as payments for medical supplies or medical equipment, are medical expenses. Medically necessary food, vitamins, and supplements as prescribed or directed by a health care provider authorized to write prescriptions are medical expenses.

(3) *Adaptive equipment.* Payments for adaptive devices or service animals, including veterinary care, used to assist a person with an ongoing disability are medical expenses. Medical expenses do not include non-prescription food, boarding, grooming, or other routine expenses of owning an animal.

(4) *Transportation expenses.* Payments for transportation for medical purposes, such as the cost of transportation to and from a health care provider's office by taxi, bus, or other form of public transportation are medical expenses. The cost of transportation for medical purposes by privately owned vehicle (POV), including mileage, parking, and tolls, is a medical expense. For transportation in a POV, VA limits the deductible mileage rate to the current POV mileage reimbursement rate specified by the United States General Services Administration (GSA). The current amount can be obtained from www.gsa.gov or on VA's website at www.benefits.va.gov/pension/. Amounts by which transportation expenses set forth in this paragraph (c)(4) exceed the amounts of other VA or non-VA reimbursements for the expense are medical expenses.

(i) *Example.* In February 2013, a veteran drives 60 miles round trip to a VA medical center and back. The veteran is reimbursed \$24.90 from the Veterans Health Administration. The POV mileage reimbursement rate specified by

GSA is \$0.565 per mile, so the transportation expense is \$0.565/mile * 60 miles = \$33.90. For VA needs-based benefits purposes, the unreimbursed amount, here, the difference between \$33.90 and \$24.90, is a medical expense.

(ii) [Reserved]

(5) *Health insurance premiums.* Payments for health, medical, hospitalization, and long-term care insurance premiums are medical expenses. Premiums for Medicare Parts A, B, and D and for long-term care insurance are medical expenses.

(6) *Smoking cessation products.* Payments for items and services specifically related to smoking cessation are medical expenses.

(7) *Institutional forms of care and in-home care.* As provided in paragraph (d) of this section.

(d) *Institutional forms of care and in-home care.* This paragraph (d) applies with respect to claims for a medical expense deduction for institutional forms of care or in-home care received on or after October 18, 2018 that VA has not previously granted.

(1) *Hospitals, nursing homes, medical foster homes, and inpatient treatment centers.* Payments to hospitals, nursing homes, medical foster homes, and inpatient treatment centers (including inpatient treatment centers for drug or alcohol addiction), including the cost of meals and lodging charged by such facilities, are medical expenses.

(2) *In-home care.* Payments for assistance with ADLs and IADLs by an in-home attendant are medical expenses as long as the attendant provides the disabled individual with health care or custodial care. Payments must be commensurate with the number of hours that the provider attends to the disabled person. The attendant must be a health care provider unless—

(i) The disabled individual needs A&A or is housebound; or

(ii) A physician, physician assistant, certified nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist states in writing that, due to a physical, mental, developmental, or cognitive disorder, the individual requires the health care or custodial care that the in-home attendant provides.

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(3) *Care facilities other than nursing homes.* (i) Care in a facility may be provided by the facility, contracted by the facility, obtained from a third-party provider, or provided by family or friends.

(ii) Payments for health care provided by a health care provider are medical expenses.

(iii) The provider does not need to be a health care provider, and payments for assistance with ADLs and IADLs are medical expenses, if the disabled individual is receiving health care or custodial care in the facility and—

(A) The disabled individual needs A&A or is housebound; or

(B) A physician, physician assistant, certified nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist states in writing that, due to a physical, mental, developmental, or cognitive disorder, the individual needs to be in a protected environment.

(iv) Payments for meals and lodging (and other facility expenses not directly related to health care or custodial care) are medical expenses if:

(A) The facility provides or contracts for health care or custodial care for the disabled individual; or

(B) A physician, physician assistant, certified nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist states in writing that the individual must reside in the facility (or a similar facility) to separately contract with a third-party provider to receive health care or custodial care or to receive (paid or unpaid) health care or custodial care from family or friends.

(e) *Non-medical expenses for VA purposes.* Payments for items and services listed in paragraphs (e)(1) through (4) of this section are not medical expenses for VA needs-based benefit purposes. The list is not all-inclusive.

(1) *Maintenance of general health.* Payments for items or services that benefit

or maintain general health, such as vacations and dance classes, are not medical expenses.

(2) *Cosmetic procedures.* Except as provided in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, cosmetic procedures are not medical expenses.

(3) *Meals and lodging.* Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, payments for meals and lodging are not medical expenses.

(4) *Assistance with IADLs.* Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, payments for assistance with IADLs are not medical expenses.

CROSS REFERENCES: For the rules governing how medical expenses are deducted, see §3.272(g) (regarding pension) and §3.262(1) (regarding section 306 pension and parents' DIC).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1315(f)(3), 1503(a)(8), 1506(1))

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirement in this section under control numbers 2900-0002, 2900-0004, and 2900-0161.)

[83 FR 47272, Sept. 18, 2018]

§3.279 Statutory exclusions from income or assets (net worth or corpus of the estate).

This section sets forth payments that Federal statutes exclude from income for the purpose of determining entitlement to any VA-administered benefit that is based on financial need. Some of the exclusions also apply to assets (pension), also known as net worth or the corpus of the estate (section 306 pension and parents as dependents for compensation). VA will exclude from income or assets any amount designated by statute as not countable as income or resources, regardless of whether or not it is listed in this section.

Program or payment	Income	Assets (corpus of the estate)	Authority
(a) COMPENSATION OR RESTITUTION PAYMENTS:			

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Program or payment	Income	Assets (corpus of the estate)	Authority
(1) <i>Relocation payments.</i> Payments to individuals displaced as a direct result of programs or projects undertaken by a Federal agency or with Federal financial assistance under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.	Excluded	Included	42 U.S.C. 4636.
(2) <i>Crime victim compensation.</i> Amounts received as compensation under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 unless the total amount of assistance received from all federally funded programs is sufficient to fully compensate the claimant for losses suffered as a result of the crime.	Excluded	Excluded	42 U.S.C. 10602(c).
(3) <i>Restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry.</i> Payments made as restitution under Public Law 100-383 to an individual of Japanese ancestry who was interned, evacuated, or relocated during the period of December 7, 1941, through June 30, 1946, pursuant to any law, Executive Order, Presidential proclamation, directive, or other official action respecting these individuals.	Excluded	Excluded	50 U.S.C. App. 1989b-4(f).
(4) <i>Victims of Nazi persecution.</i> Payments made to individuals because of their status as victims of Nazi persecution.	Excluded	Excluded	42 U.S.C. 1437a note.
(5) <i>Agent Orange settlement payments.</i> Payments made from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in the In Re Agent Orange product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.).	Excluded	Excluded	Sec. 1, Public Law 101-201.
(6) <i>Chapter 18 benefits.</i> Allowances paid under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 to a veteran's child with a birth defect.	Excluded	Excluded	38 U.S.C. 1833(c).

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Program or payment	Income	Assets (corpus of the estate)	Authority
(7) <i>Flood mitigation activities</i> . Assistance provided under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended.	Excluded	Excluded	42 U.S.C. 4031.
(b) PAYMENTS TO NATIVE AMERICANS:			
(1) <i>Indian Tribal Judgment Fund distributions</i> . All Indian Tribal Judgment Fund distributions excluded from income and assets while such funds are held in trust. First \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians under the Indian Tribal Judgment Funds Use or Distribution Act in satisfaction of a judgment of the United States Court of Federal Claims excluded from income.	Excluded	Excluded	25 U.S.C. 1407.
(2) <i>Interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands</i> . Interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands excluded from assets. First \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians that is derived from interests in trust or restricted lands excluded from income.	Excluded	Excluded	25 U.S.C. 1408.
(3) <i>Per Capita Distributions Act</i> . First \$2,000 per year of per capita distributions to members of a tribe from funds held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for an Indian tribe. All funds excluded from income and assets while funds are held in trust.	Excluded	Excluded	25 U.S.C. 117b, 25 U.S.C. 1407.
(4) <i>Submarginal land</i> . Income derived from certain submarginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes.	Excluded	Excluded	25 U.S.C. 459e.
(5) <i>Old Age Assistance Claims Settlement Act</i> . Up to \$2,000 per year of per capita distributions under the Old Age Assistance Claims Settlement Act.	Excluded	Excluded	25 U.S.C. 2307.

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Program or payment	Income	Assets (corpus of the estate)	Authority
<p>(6) <i>Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act</i>. Any of the following, if received from a Native Corporation, under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Cash, including cash dividends on stocks and bonds, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per year; (ii) Stock, including stock issued as a dividend or distribution; (iii) Bonds that are subject to the protection under 43 U.S.C. 1606(h) until voluntarily and expressly sold or pledged by the shareholder after the date of distribution; (iv) A partnership interest; (v) Land or an interest in land, including land received as a dividend or distribution on stock; (vi) An interest in a settlement trust. 	Excluded	Excluded	43 U.S.C. 1626(c).
<p>(7) <i>Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act</i>. Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980.</p>	Excluded	Excluded	25 U.S.C. 1728.
<p>(8) <i>Cobell Settlement</i>. Payments received under <i>Cobell v. Salazar</i>, Civil Action No. 96-1285 (TFH) (D.D.C.).</p>	Excluded for one year.	Excluded for one year.	Sec. 101, Public Law 111-291.
<p>(c) WORK-RELATED PAYMENTS: (1) <i>Workforce investment</i>. Allowances, earnings, and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.</p>	Excluded	Included	29 U.S.C. 3241(a)(2).

Program or payment	Income	Assets (corpus of the estate)	Authority
(2) <i>AmeriCorps participants.</i> Allowances, earnings, and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.	Excluded	Included	42 U.S.C. 12637(d).
(3) <i>Volunteer work.</i> Compensation or reimbursement to volunteers involved in programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, unless the payments are equal to or greater than the minimum wage. The minimum wage is either that under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 <i>et seq.</i>) or that under the law of the State where the volunteers are serving, whichever is greater.	Excluded	Excluded	42 U.S.C. 5044(f).
(d) MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENTS:			
(1) <i>Income tax refunds.</i> Income tax refunds, including the Federal Earned Income Credit and advance payments with respect to a refundable credit.	Excluded	Excluded for one year.	26 U.S.C. 6409.
(2) <i>Food stamps.</i> Value of the allotment provided to an eligible household under the Food Stamp Program.	Excluded	Excluded	7 U.S.C. 2017(b).
(3) <i>Food for children.</i> Value of free or reduced-price for food under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.	Excluded	Excluded	42 U.S.C. 1780(b).
(4) <i>Child care.</i> Value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990.	Excluded	Included	42 U.S.C. 9858q.
(5) <i>Services for housing recipients.</i> Value of services, but not wages, provided to a resident of an eligible housing project under a congregate services program under the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act.	Excluded	Included	42 U.S.C. 8011(j)(2).

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Program or payment	Income	Assets (corpus of the estate)	Authority
(6) <i>Home energy assistance.</i> The amount of any home energy assistance payments or allowances provided directly to, or indirectly for the benefit of, an eligible household under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981.	Excluded	Excluded	42 U.S.C. 8624(f).
(7) <i>Programs for older Americans.</i> Payments, other than wages or salaries, received from programs funded under the Older Americans Act of 1965, 42 U.S.C. 3001.	Excluded	Included	42 U.S.C. 3020a(b).
(8) <i>Student financial aid.</i> Amounts of student financial assistance received under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, including Federal work-study programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs, or vocational training under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998.	Excluded	Excluded	20 U.S.C. 1087uu, 2414(a).
(9) <i>Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan annuities.</i> Annuities received under subchapter I of the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan.	Excluded	Included	10 U.S.C. 1441.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))
 [83 FR 47274, Sept. 18, 2018]

RATINGS AND EVALUATIONS; BASIC ENTITLEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

§ 3.300 Claims based on the effects of tobacco products.

(a) For claims received by VA after June 9, 1998, a disability or death will not be considered service-connected on the basis that it resulted from injury or disease attributable to the veteran's use of tobacco products during service. For the purpose of this section, the term "tobacco products" means cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, and roll-your-own tobacco.

(b) The provisions of paragraph (a) of this section do not prohibit service connection if:

(1) The disability or death resulted from a disease or injury that is otherwise shown to have been incurred or aggravated during service. For purposes of this section, "otherwise shown" means that the disability or death can be service-connected on some basis other than the veteran's use of tobacco products during service, or that the disability became manifest or death occurred during service; or

(2) The disability or death resulted from a disease or injury that appeared to the required degree of disability

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within any applicable presumptive period under §§ 3.307, 3.309, 3.313, or 3.316; or

(3) Secondary service connection is established for ischemic heart disease or other cardiovascular disease under § 3.310(b).

(c) For claims for secondary service connection received by VA after June 9, 1998, a disability that is proximately due to or the result of an injury or disease previously service-connected on the basis that it is attributable to the veteran's use of tobacco products during service will not be service-connected under § 3.310(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1103, 1103 note)
[66 FR 18198, Apr. 6, 2001]

§ 3.301 Line of duty and misconduct.

(a) *Line of duty.* Direct service connection may be granted only when a disability or cause of death was incurred or aggravated in line of duty, and not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct or, for claims filed after October 31, 1990, the result of his or her abuse of alcohol or drugs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105)

(b) *Willful misconduct.* Disability pension is not payable for any condition due to the veteran's own willful misconduct.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521)

(c) *Specific applications; willful misconduct.* For the purpose of determining entitlement to service-connected and nonservice-connected benefits the definitions in §§ 3.1 (m) and (n) of this part apply except as modified within paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) of this section. The provisions of paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section are subject to the provisions of § 3.302 of this part where applicable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) *Venereal disease.* The residuals of venereal disease are not to be considered the result of willful misconduct. Consideration of service connection for residuals of venereal disease as having been incurred in service requires that the initial infection must have occurred during active service. Increase

in service of manifestations of venereal disease will usually be held due to natural progress unless the facts of record indicate the increase in manifestations was precipitated by trauma or by the conditions of the veteran's service, in which event service connection may be established by aggravation. Medical principles pertaining to the incubation period and its relation to the course of the disease; *i.e.*, initial or acute manifestation, or period and course of secondary and late residuals manifested, will be considered when time of incurrance of venereal disease prior to or after entry into service is at issue. In the issue of service connection, whether the veteran complied with service regulations and directives for reporting the disease and undergoing treatment is immaterial after November 14, 1972, and the service department characterization of acquisition of the disease as *willful misconduct* or as *not in line of duty* will not govern.

(2) The simple drinking of alcoholic beverage is not of itself willful misconduct. The deliberate drinking of a known poisonous substance or under conditions which would raise a presumption to that effect will be considered willful misconduct. If, in the drinking of a beverage to enjoy its intoxicating effects, intoxication results proximately and immediately in disability or death, the disability or death will be considered the result of the person's willful misconduct. Organic diseases and disabilities which are a secondary result of the chronic use of alcohol as a beverage, whether out of compulsion or otherwise, will not be considered of willful misconduct origin. (See §§ 21.1043, 21.5041, and 21.7051 of this title regarding the disabling effects of chronic alcoholism for the purpose of extending delimiting periods under education or rehabilitation programs.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) *Drug usage.* The isolated and infrequent use of drugs by itself will not be considered willful misconduct; however, the progressive and frequent use of drugs to the point of addiction will be considered willful misconduct.

Where drugs are used to enjoy or experience their effects and the effects result proximately and immediately in disability or death, such disability or death will be considered the result of the person's willful misconduct. Organic diseases and disabilities which are a secondary result of the chronic use of drugs and infections coinciding with the injection of drugs will not be considered of willful misconduct origin. (See paragraph (d) of this section regarding service connection where disability or death is a result of abuse of drugs.) Where drugs are used for therapeutic purposes or where use of drugs or addiction thereto, results from a service-connected disability, it will not be considered of misconduct origin.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105, 1110, 1121, 1131, 1301, and 1521(a))

(d) *Line of duty; abuse of alcohol or drugs.* An injury or disease incurred during active military, naval, or air service shall not be deemed to have been incurred in line of duty if such injury or disease was a result of the abuse of alcohol or drugs by the person on whose service benefits are claimed. For the purpose of this paragraph, alcohol abuse means the use of alcoholic beverages over time, or such excessive use at any one time, sufficient to cause disability to or death of the user; drug abuse means the use of illegal drugs (including prescription drugs that are illegally or illicitly obtained), the intentional use of prescription or non-prescription drugs for a purpose other than the medically intended use, or the use of substances other than alcohol to enjoy their intoxicating effects.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105(a))

CROSS REFERENCES: In line of duty. See § 3.1(m). Willful misconduct. See § 3.1(n). Extended period of eligibility. See §§ 21.1043 and 21.7051. Periods of entitlement. See § 21.5041.

[26 FR 1579, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 37 FR 24662, Nov. 18, 1972; 54 FR 31951, Aug. 3, 1989; 55 FR 13530, Apr. 11, 1990; 60 FR 27408, May 24, 1995]

§ 3.302 Service connection for mental unsoundness in suicide.

(a) *General.* (1) In order for suicide to constitute willful misconduct, the act of self-destruction must be intentional.

(2) A person of unsound mind is incapable of forming an intent (*mens rea*, or guilty mind, which is an essential element of crime or willful misconduct).

(3) It is a constant requirement for favorable action that the precipitating mental unsoundness be service connected.

(b) *Evidence of mental condition.* (1) Whether a person, at the time of suicide, was so unsound mentally that he or she did not realize the consequence of such an act, or was unable to resist such impulse is a question to be determined in each individual case, based on all available lay and medical evidence pertaining to his or her mental condition at the time of suicide.

(2) The act of suicide or a bona fide attempt is considered to be evidence of mental unsoundness. Therefore, where no reasonable adequate motive for suicide is shown by the evidence, the act will be considered to have resulted from mental unsoundness.

(3) A reasonable adequate motive for suicide may be established by affirmative evidence showing circumstances which could lead a rational person to self-destruction.

(c) *Evaluation of evidence.* (1) Affirmative evidence is necessary to justify reversal of service department findings of mental unsoundness where Department of Veterans Affairs criteria do not otherwise warrant contrary findings.

(2) In all instances any reasonable doubt should be resolved favorably to support a finding of service connection (see § 3.102).

CROSS REFERENCE: Cause of death. See § 3.312.

[28 FR 183, Jan. 8, 1963, as amended at 54 FR 31951, Aug. 3, 1989; 55 FR 13530, Apr. 11, 1990]

RATINGS AND EVALUATIONS; SERVICE CONNECTION

§ 3.303 Principles relating to service connection.

(a) *General.* Service connection connotes many factors but basically it means that the facts, shown by evidence, establish that a particular injury or disease resulting in disability was incurred coincident with service in the Armed Forces, or if preexisting such service, was aggravated therein.

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This may be accomplished by affirmatively showing inception or aggravation during service or through the application of statutory presumptions. Each disabling condition shown by a veteran's service records, or for which he seeks a service connection must be considered on the basis of the places, types and circumstances of his service as shown by service records, the official history of each organization in which he served, his medical records and all pertinent medical and lay evidence. Determinations as to service connection will be based on review of the entire evidence of record, with due consideration to the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad and liberal interpretation consistent with the facts in each individual case.

(b) *Chronicity and continuity.* With chronic disease shown as such in service (or within the presumptive period under § 3.307) so as to permit a finding of service connection, subsequent manifestations of the same chronic disease at any later date, however remote, are service connected, unless clearly attributable to intercurrent causes. This rule does not mean that any manifestation of joint pain, any abnormality of heart action or heart sounds, any urinary findings of casts, or any cough, in service will permit service connection of arthritis, disease of the heart, nephritis, or pulmonary disease, first shown as a clearcut clinical entity, at some later date. For the showing of chronic disease in service there is required a combination of manifestations sufficient to identify the disease entity, and sufficient observation to establish chronicity at the time, as distinguished from merely isolated findings or a diagnosis including the word "Chronic." When the disease identity is established (leprosy, tuberculosis, multiple sclerosis, etc.), there is no requirement of evidentiary showing of continuity. Continuity of symptomatology is required only where the condition noted during service (or in the presumptive period) is not, in fact, shown to be chronic or where the diagnosis of chronicity may be legitimately questioned. When the fact of chronicity in service is not adequately supported,

then a showing of continuity after discharge is required to support the claim.

(c) *Preservice disabilities noted in service.* There are medical principles so universally recognized as to constitute fact (clear and unmistakable proof), and when in accordance with these principles existence of a disability prior to service is established, no additional or confirmatory evidence is necessary. Consequently with notation or discovery during service of such residual conditions (scars; fibrosis of the lungs; atrophies following disease of the central or peripheral nervous system; healed fractures; absent, displaced or resected parts of organs; supernumerary parts; congenital malformations or hemorrhoidal tags or tabs, etc.) with no evidence of the pertinent antecedent active disease or injury during service the conclusion must be that they preexisted service. Similarly, manifestation of lesions or symptoms of chronic disease from date of enlistment, or so close thereto that the disease could not have originated in so short a period will establish preservice existence thereof. Conditions of an infectious nature are to be considered with regard to the circumstances of the infection and if manifested in less than the respective incubation periods after reporting for duty, they will be held to have preexisted service. In the field of mental disorders, personality disorders which are characterized by developmental defects or pathological trends in the personality structure manifested by a lifelong pattern of action or behavior, chronic psychoneurosis of long duration or other psychiatric symptomatology shown to have existed prior to service with the same manifestations during service, which were the basis of the service diagnosis, will be accepted as showing preservice origin. Congenital or developmental defects, refractive error of the eye, personality disorders and mental deficiency as such are not diseases or injuries within the meaning of applicable legislation.

(d) *Postservice initial diagnosis of disease.* Service connection may be granted for any disease diagnosed after discharge, when all the evidence, including that pertinent to service, establishes that the disease was incurred in

service. Presumptive periods are not intended to limit service connection to diseases so diagnosed when the evidence warrants direct service connection. The presumptive provisions of the statute and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations implementing them are intended as liberalizations applicable when the evidence would not warrant service connection without their aid.

[26 FR 1579, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.304 Direct service connection; wartime and peacetime.

(a) *General.* The basic considerations relating to service connection are stated in § 3.303. The criteria in this section apply only to disabilities which may have resulted from service in a period of war or service rendered on or after January 1, 1947.

(b) *Presumption of soundness.* The veteran will be considered to have been in sound condition when examined, accepted and enrolled for service, except as to defects, infirmities, or disorders noted at entrance into service, or where clear and unmistakable (obvious or manifest) evidence demonstrates that an injury or disease existed prior thereto and was not aggravated by such service. Only such conditions as are recorded in examination reports are to be considered as noted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1111)

(1) History of preservice existence of conditions recorded at the time of examination does not constitute a notation of such conditions but will be considered together with all other material evidence in determinations as to inception. Determinations should not be based on medical judgment alone as distinguished from accepted medical principles, or on history alone without regard to clinical factors pertinent to the basic character, origin and development of such injury or disease. They should be based on thorough analysis of the evidentiary showing and careful correlation of all material facts, with due regard to accepted medical principles pertaining to the history, manifestations, clinical course, and character of the particular injury or disease or residuals thereof.

(2) History conforming to accepted medical principles should be given due consideration, in conjunction with basic clinical data, and be accorded probative value consistent with accepted medical and evidentiary principles in relation to value consistent with accepted medical evidence relating to incurrence, symptoms and course of the injury or disease, including official and other records made prior to, during or subsequent to service, together with all other lay and medical evidence concerning the inception, development and manifestations of the particular condition will be taken into full account.

(3) Signed statements of veterans relating to the origin, or incurrence of any disease or injury made in service if against his or her own interest is of no force and effect if other data do not establish the fact. Other evidence will be considered as though such statement were not of record.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1219)

(c) *Development.* The development of evidence in connection with claims for service connection will be accomplished when deemed necessary but it should not be undertaken when evidence present is sufficient for this determination. In initially rating disability of record at the time of discharge, the records of the service department, including the reports of examination at enlistment and the clinical records during service, will ordinarily suffice. Rating of combat injuries or other conditions which obviously had their inception in service may be accomplished pending receipt of copy of the examination at enlistment and all other service records.

(d) *Combat.* Satisfactory lay or other evidence that an injury or disease was incurred or aggravated in combat will be accepted as sufficient proof of service connection if the evidence is consistent with the circumstances, conditions or hardships of such service even though there is no official record of such incurrence or aggravation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1154(b))

(e) *Prisoners of war.* Where disability compensation is claimed by a former prisoner of war, omission of history or findings from clinical records made

upon repatriation is not determinative of service connection, particularly if evidence of comrades in support of the incurrence of the disability during confinement is available. Special attention will be given to any disability first reported after discharge, especially if poorly defined and not obviously of intercurrent origin. The circumstances attendant upon the individual veteran's confinement and the duration thereof will be associated with pertinent medical principles in determining whether disability manifested subsequent to service is etiologically related to the prisoner of war experience.

(f) *Posttraumatic stress disorder.* Service connection for posttraumatic stress disorder requires medical evidence diagnosing the condition in accordance with § 4.125(a) of this chapter; a link, established by medical evidence, between current symptoms and an in-service stressor; and credible supporting evidence that the claimed in-service stressor occurred. The following provisions apply to claims for service connection of posttraumatic stress disorder diagnosed during service or based on the specified type of claimed stressor:

(1) If the evidence establishes a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder during service and the claimed stressor is related to that service, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances, conditions, or hardships of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor.

(2) If the evidence establishes that the veteran engaged in combat with the enemy and the claimed stressor is related to that combat, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances, conditions, or hardships of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor.

(3) If a stressor claimed by a veteran is related to the veteran's fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and a VA psychiatrist or psychologist, or a

psychiatrist or psychologist with whom VA has contracted, confirms that the claimed stressor is adequate to support a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder and that the veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided the claimed stressor is consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor. For purposes of this paragraph, "fear of hostile military or terrorist activity" means that a veteran experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or circumstance that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of the veteran or others, such as from an actual or potential improvised explosive device; vehicle-imbedded explosive device; incoming artillery, rocket, or mortar fire; grenade; small arms fire, including suspected sniper fire; or attack upon friendly military aircraft, and the veteran's response to the event or circumstance involved a psychological or psycho-physiological state of fear, helplessness, or horror.

(4) If the evidence establishes that the veteran was a prisoner-of-war under the provisions of § 3.1(y) of this part and the claimed stressor is related to that prisoner-of-war experience, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances, conditions, or hardships of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor.

(5) If a posttraumatic stress disorder claim is based on in-service personal assault, evidence from sources other than the veteran's service records may corroborate the veteran's account of the stressor incident. Examples of such evidence include, but are not limited to: records from law enforcement authorities, rape crisis centers, mental health counseling centers, hospitals, or physicians; pregnancy tests or tests for sexually transmitted diseases; and statements from family members, roommates, fellow service members, or

clergy. Evidence of behavior changes following the claimed assault is one type of relevant evidence that may be found in these sources. Examples of behavior changes that may constitute credible evidence of the stressor include, but are not limited to: a request for a transfer to another military duty assignment; deterioration in work performance; substance abuse; episodes of depression, panic attacks, or anxiety without an identifiable cause; or unexplained economic or social behavior changes. VA will not deny a posttraumatic stress disorder claim that is based on in-service personal assault without first advising the claimant that evidence from sources other than the veteran's service records or evidence of behavior changes may constitute credible supporting evidence of the stressor and allowing him or her the opportunity to furnish this type of evidence or advise VA of potential sources of such evidence. VA may submit any evidence that it receives to an appropriate medical or mental health professional for an opinion as to whether it indicates that a personal assault occurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1154)

[26 FR 1580, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 31 FR 4680, Mar. 19, 1966; 39 FR 34530, Sept. 26, 1974; 58 FR 29110, May 19, 1993; 64 FR 32808, June 18, 1999; 67 FR 10332, Mar. 7, 2002; 70 FR 23029, May 4, 2005; 73 FR 64210, Oct. 29, 2008; 75 FR 39852, July 13, 2010]

§ 3.305 Direct service connection; peacetime service before January 1, 1947.

(a) *General.* The basic considerations relating to service connection are stated in § 3.303. The criteria in this section apply only to disabilities which may have resulted from service other than in a period of war before January 1, 1947.

(b) *Presumption of soundness.* A peacetime veteran who has had active, continuous service of 6 months or more will be considered to have been in sound condition when examined, accepted and enrolled for service, except as to defects, infirmities or disorders noted at the time thereof, or where evidence or medical judgment, as distinguished from medical fact and principles, establishes that an injury or

disease preexisted service. Any evidence acceptable as competent to indicate the time of existence or inception of the condition may be considered. Determinations based on medical judgment will take cognizance of the time of inception or manifestation of disease or injury following entrance into service, as shown by proper service authorities in service records, entries or reports. Such records will be accorded reasonable weight in consideration of other evidence and sound medical reasoning. Opinions may be solicited from Department of Veterans Affairs medical authorities when considered necessary.

(c) *Campaigns and expeditions.* In considering claims of veterans who engaged in combat during campaigns or expeditions satisfactory lay or other evidence of incurrence or aggravation in such combat of an injury or disease, if consistent with the circumstances, conditions or hardships of such service will be accepted as sufficient proof of service connection, even when there is no official record of incurrence or aggravation. Service connection for such injury or disease may be rebutted by clear and convincing evidence to the contrary.

[26 FR 1580, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 28 FR 3088, Mar. 29, 1963; 39 FR 34530, Sept. 26, 1974]

§ 3.306 Aggravation of preservice disability.

(a) *General.* A preexisting injury or disease will be considered to have been aggravated by active military, naval, or air service, where there is an increase in disability during such service, unless there is a specific finding that the increase in disability is due to the natural progress of the disease.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1153)

(b) *Wartime service; peacetime service after December 31, 1946.* Clear and unmistakable evidence (obvious or manifest) is required to rebut the presumption of aggravation where the preservice disability underwent an increase in severity during service. This includes medical facts and principles which may be considered to determine

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whether the increase is due to the natural progress of the condition. Aggravation may not be conceded where the disability underwent no increase in severity during service on the basis of all the evidence of record pertaining to the manifestations of the disability prior to, during and subsequent to service.

(1) The usual effects of medical and surgical treatment in service, having the effect of ameliorating disease or other conditions incurred before enlistment, including postoperative scars, absent or poorly functioning parts or organs, will not be considered service connected unless the disease or injury is otherwise aggravated by service.

(2) Due regard will be given the places, types, and circumstances of service and particular consideration will be accorded combat duty and other hardships of service. The development of symptomatic manifestations of a preexisting disease or injury during or proximately following action with the enemy or following a status as a prisoner of war will establish aggravation of a disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1154)

(c) *Peacetime service prior to December 7, 1941.* The specific finding requirement that an increase in disability is due to the natural progress of the condition will be met when the available evidence of a nature generally acceptable as competent shows that the increase in severity of a disease or injury or acceleration in progress was that normally to be expected by reason of the inherent character of the condition, aside from any extraneous or contributing cause or influence peculiar to military service. Consideration will be given to the circumstances, conditions, and hardships of service.

[26 FR 1580, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 57 FR 59296, Dec. 15, 1992]

§ 3.307 Presumptive service connection for chronic, tropical, or prisoner-of-war related disease, disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents, or disease associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune; wartime and service on or after January 1, 1947.

(a) *General.* A chronic, tropical, or prisoner of war related disease, a disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents, or a disease associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune listed in § 3.309 will be considered to have been incurred in or aggravated by service under the circumstances outlined in this section even though there is no evidence of such disease during the period of service. No condition other than one listed in § 3.309(a) will be considered chronic.

(1) *Service.* The veteran must have served 90 days or more during a war period or after December 31, 1946. The requirement of 90 days' service means active, continuous service within or extending into or beyond a war period, or which began before and extended beyond December 31, 1946, or began after that date. Any period of service is sufficient for the purpose of establishing the presumptive service connection of a specified disease under the conditions listed in § 3.309(c) and (e). Any period of service is sufficient for the purpose of establishing the presumptive service connection of a specified disease under the conditions listed in § 3.309(f), as long as the period of service also satisfies the requirements to establish a presumption of exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune under paragraph (a)(7)(iii) of this section.

(2) *Separation from service.* For the purpose of paragraph (a)(3) and (4) of this section the date of separation from wartime service will be the date of discharge or release during a war period, or if service continued after the war, the end of the war period. In claims based on service on or after January 1, 1947, the date of separation will be the date of discharge or release from the period of service on which the claim is based.

(3) *Chronic disease.* The disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10

percent or more within 1 year (for Hansen's disease (leprosy) and tuberculosis, within 3 years; multiple sclerosis, within 7 years) from the date of separation from service as specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(4) *Tropical disease.* The disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from date of separation from service as specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, or at a time when standard accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during such service. The resultant disorders or diseases originating because of therapy administered in connection with a tropical disease or as a preventative may also be service connected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112)

(5) *Diseases specific as to former prisoners of war.* The diseases listed in § 3.309(c) shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active service.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112)

(6) *Diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents.* (i) For the purposes of this section, the term "herbicide agent" means a chemical in an herbicide used in support of the United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, specifically: 2,4-D; 2,4,5-T and its contaminant TCDD; cacodylic acid; and picloram.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1116(a)(4))

(ii) The diseases listed at § 3.309(e) shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after service, except that chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, and early-onset peripheral neuropathy shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service.

(iii) A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the

period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to an herbicide agent, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent during that service. The last date on which such a veteran shall be presumed to have been exposed to an herbicide agent shall be the last date on which he or she served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975. "Service in the Republic of Vietnam" includes service in the waters offshore and service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam.

(iv) A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971, in a unit that, as determined by the Department of Defense, operated in or near the Korean DMZ in an area in which herbicides are known to have been applied during that period, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to an herbicide agent, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent during that service. *See also* 38 CFR 3.814(c)(2).

(v) An individual who performed service in the Air Force or Air Force Reserve under circumstances in which the individual concerned regularly and repeatedly operated, maintained, or served onboard C-123 aircraft known to have been used to spray an herbicide agent during the Vietnam era shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to an herbicide agent. For purposes of this paragraph, "regularly and repeatedly operated, maintained, or served onboard C-123 aircraft" means that the individual was assigned to an Air Force or Air Force Reserve squadron when the squadron was permanently assigned one of the affected aircraft and the individual had an Air Force Specialty Code indicating duties as a flight, ground maintenance, or medical crew member on such aircraft. Such exposure constitutes an injury under 38 U.S.C. 101(24)(B) and (C). If an individual described in this paragraph develops a disease listed in 38 CFR 3.309(e) as specified in paragraph

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(a)(6)(ii) of this section, it will be presumed that the individual concerned became disabled during that service for purposes of establishing that the individual served in the active military, naval, or air service.

(7) *Diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune.* (i) For the purposes of this section, *contaminants in the water supply* means the volatile organic compounds trichloroethylene (TCE), perchloroethylene (PCE), benzene and vinyl chloride, that were in the on-base water-supply systems located at United States Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987.

(ii) The diseases listed in § 3.309(f) shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after service.

(iii) A veteran, or former reservist or member of the National Guard, who had no less than 30 days (consecutive or nonconsecutive) of service at Camp Lejeune during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to the contaminants in the water supply, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the individual was not exposed to contaminants in the water supply during that service. The last date on which such a veteran, or former reservist or member of the National Guard, shall be presumed to have been exposed to contaminants in the water supply shall be the last date on which he or she served at Camp Lejeune during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987. For purposes of this section, *service at Camp Lejeune* means any service within the borders of the entirety of the United States Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina, during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987, as established by military orders or other official service department records.

(iv) Exposure described in paragraph (a)(7)(iii) of this section is an injury under 38 U.S.C. 101(24)(B) and (C). If an individual described in paragraph

(a)(7)(iii) of this section develops a disease listed in § 3.309(f), VA will presume that the individual concerned became disabled during that service for purposes of establishing that the individual served in the active military, naval, or air service.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1116(a)(3), and 1821)

(b) *Evidentiary basis.* The factual basis may be established by medical evidence, competent lay evidence or both. Medical evidence should set forth the physical findings and symptomatology elicited by examination within the applicable period. Lay evidence should describe the material and relevant facts as to the veteran's disability observed within such period, not merely conclusions based upon opinion. The chronicity and continuity factors outlined in § 3.303(b) will be considered. The diseases listed in § 3.309(a) will be accepted as chronic, even though diagnosed as acute because of insidious inception and chronic development, except: (1) Where they result from intercurrent causes, for example, cerebral hemorrhage due to injury, or active nephritis or acute endocarditis due to intercurrent infection (with or without identification of the pathogenic microorganism); or (2) where a disease is the result of drug ingestion or a complication of some other condition not related to service. Thus, leukemia will be accepted as a chronic disease whether diagnosed as acute or chronic. Unless the clinical picture is clear otherwise, consideration will be given as to whether an acute condition is an exacerbation of a chronic disease.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112)

(c) *Prohibition of certain presumptions.* No presumptions may be invoked on the basis of advancement of the disease when first definitely diagnosed for the purpose of showing its existence to a degree of 10 percent within the applicable period. This will not be interpreted as requiring that the disease be diagnosed in the presumptive period, but only that there be then shown by acceptable medical or lay evidence characteristic manifestations of the disease to the required degree, followed without unreasonable time lapse by definite

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diagnosis. Symptomatology shown in the prescribed period may have no particular significance when first observed, but in the light of subsequent developments it may gain considerable significance. Cases in which a chronic condition is shown to exist within a short time following the applicable presumptive period, but without evidence of manifestations within the period, should be developed to determine whether there was symptomatology which in retrospect may be identified and evaluated as manifestation of the chronic disease to the required 10-percent degree.

(d) *Rebuttal of service incurrence or aggravation.* (1) Evidence which may be considered in rebuttal of service incurrence of a disease listed in § 3.309 will be any evidence of a nature usually accepted as competent to indicate the time of existence or inception of disease, and medical judgment will be exercised in making determinations relative to the effect of intercurrent injury or disease. The expression "affirmative evidence to the contrary" will not be taken to require a conclusive showing, but such showing as would, in sound medical reasoning and in the consideration of all evidence of record, support a conclusion that the disease was not incurred in service. As to tropical diseases the fact that the veteran had no service in a locality having a high incidence of the disease may be considered as evidence to rebut the presumption, as may residence during the period in question in a region where the particular disease is endemic. The known incubation periods of tropical diseases should be used as a factor in rebuttal of presumptive service connection as showing inception before or after service.

(2) The presumption of aggravation provided in this section may be rebutted by affirmative evidence that the preexisting condition was not aggravated by service, which may include affirmative evidence that any increase in disability was due to an intercurrent disease or injury suffered after separation from service or evidence sufficient, under § 3.306 of this part, to show that the increase in disability was due

to the natural progress of the pre-existing condition.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(24), 501(a), 1116(a)(3), and 1821)

[26 FR 1581, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 35 FR 18281, Dec. 1, 1970; 39 FR 34530, Sept. 26, 1974; 43 FR 45347, Oct. 2, 1978; 47 FR 11655, Mar. 18, 1982; 58 FR 29109, May 19, 1993; 59 FR 5106, Feb. 3, 1994; 59 FR 29724, June 9, 1994; 61 FR 57588, Nov. 7, 1996; 62 FR 35422, July 1, 1997; 67 FR 67793, Nov. 7, 2002; 68 FR 34541, June 10, 2003; 76 FR 4248, Jan. 25, 2011; 78 FR 54766, Sept. 6, 2013; 80 FR 35248, June 19, 2015; 82 FR 4184, Jan. 13, 2017]

§ 3.308 Presumptive service connection; peacetime service before January 1, 1947.

(a) *Chronic disease.* There is no provision for presumptive service connection for chronic disease as distinguished from tropical diseases referred to in paragraph (b) of this section based on peacetime service before January 1, 1947.

(b) *Tropical disease.* In claims based on peacetime service before January 1, 1947, a veteran of 6 months or more service who contracts a tropical disease listed in § 3.309(b) or a resultant disorder or disease originating because of therapy administered in connection with a tropical disease or as a preventative, will be considered to have incurred such disability in service when it is shown to exist to the degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year after separation from active service, or at a time when standard and accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during active service unless shown by clear and unmistakable evidence not to have been of service origin. The requirement of 6 months or more service means active, continuous service, during one or more enlistment periods.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1133)

[39 FR 34530, Sept. 26, 1974]

§ 3.309 Disease subject to presumptive service connection.

(a) *Chronic diseases.* The following diseases shall be granted service connection although not otherwise established as incurred in or aggravated by service if manifested to a compensable degree within the applicable time limits under § 3.307 following service in a

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period of war or following peacetime service on or after January 1, 1947, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 are also satisfied.

Anemia, primary.
Arteriosclerosis.
Arthritis.
Atrophy, progressive muscular.
Brain hemorrhage.
Brain thrombosis.
Bronchiectasis.
Calculi of the kidney, bladder, or gallbladder.

Cardiovascular-renal disease, including hypertension. (This term applies to combination involvement of the type of arteriosclerosis, nephritis, and organic heart disease, and since hypertension is an early symptom long preceding the development of those diseases in their more obvious forms, a disabling hypertension within the 1-year period will be given the same benefit of service connection as any of the chronic diseases listed.)

Cirrhosis of the liver.
Coccidioidomycosis.
Diabetes mellitus.
Encephalitis lethargica residuals.
Endocarditis. (This term covers all forms of valvular heart disease.)
Endocrinopathies.
Epilepsies.
Hansen's disease.
Hodgkin's disease.
Leukemia.
Lupus erythematosus, systemic.
Myasthenia gravis.
Myelitis.
Myocarditis.
Nephritis.
Other organic diseases of the nervous system.
Osteitis deformans (Paget's disease).
Osteomalacia.
Palsy, bulbar.
Paralysis agitans.
Psychoses.
Purpura idiopathic, hemorrhagic.
Raynaud's disease.
Sarcoidosis.
Scleroderma.
Sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral.
Sclerosis, multiple.
Syringomyelia.
Thromboangiitis obliterans (Buerger's disease).
Tuberculosis, active.
Tumors, malignant, or of the brain or spinal cord or peripheral nerves.
Ulcers, peptic (gastric or duodenal) (A proper diagnosis of gastric or duodenal ulcer (peptic ulcer) is to be considered established if

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it represents a medically sound interpretation of sufficient clinical findings warranting such diagnosis and provides an adequate basis for a differential diagnosis from other conditions with like symptomatology; in short, where the preponderance of evidence indicates gastric or duodenal ulcer (peptic ulcer). Whenever possible, of course, laboratory findings should be used in corroboration of the clinical data.

(b) *Tropical diseases.* The following diseases shall be granted service connection as a result of tropical service, although not otherwise established as incurred in service if manifested to a compensable degree within the applicable time limits under § 3.307 or § 3.308 following service in a period of war or following peacetime service, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 are also satisfied.

Amebiasis.
Blackwater fever.
Cholera.
Dracontiasis.
Dysentery.
Filariasis.
Leishmaniasis, including kala-azar.
Loiasis.
Malaria.
Onchocerciasis.
Oroya fever.
Pinta.
Plague.
Schistosomiasis.
Yaws.
Yellow fever.
Resultant disorders or diseases originating because of therapy administered in connection with such diseases or as a preventative thereof.

(c) *Diseases specific as to former prisoners of war.* (1) If a veteran is a former prisoner of war, the following diseases shall be service connected if manifest to a degree of disability of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service even though there is no record of such disease during service, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 are also satisfied.
Psychosis.
Any of the anxiety states.
Dysthymic disorder (or depressive neurosis).
Organic residuals of frostbite, if it is determined that the veteran was interned in climatic conditions consistent with the occurrence of frostbite.
Post-traumatic osteoarthritis.

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Atherosclerotic heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease) and their complications (including myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, arrhythmia). Stroke and its complications.

On or after October 10, 2008, Osteoporosis, if the Secretary determines that the veteran has posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

(2) If the veteran:

- (i) Is a former prisoner of war and;
- (ii) Was interned or detained for not less than 30 days, the following diseases shall be service connected if manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service even though there is no record of such disease during service, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 are also satisfied.

Avitaminosis.
 Beriberi (including beriberi heart disease).
 Chronic dysentery.
 Helminthiasis.
 Malnutrition (including optic atrophy associated with malnutrition).
 Pellagra.
 Any other nutritional deficiency.
 Irritable bowel syndrome.
 Peptic ulcer disease.
 Peripheral neuropathy except where directly related to infectious causes.
 Cirrhosis of the liver.
 On or after September 28, 2009, Osteoporosis.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112(b))

(d) *Diseases specific to radiation-exposed veterans.* (1) The diseases listed in paragraph (d)(2) of this section shall be service-connected if they become manifest in a radiation-exposed veteran as defined in paragraph (d)(3) of this section, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 of this part are also satisfied.

(2) The diseases referred to in paragraph (d)(1) of this section are the following:

- (i) Leukemia (other than chronic lymphocytic leukemia).
- (ii) Cancer of the thyroid.
- (iii) Cancer of the breast.
- (iv) Cancer of the pharynx.
- (v) Cancer of the esophagus.
- (vi) Cancer of the stomach.
- (vii) Cancer of the small intestine.
- (viii) Cancer of the pancreas.
- (ix) Multiple myeloma.
- (x) Lymphomas (except Hodgkin's disease).
- (xi) Cancer of the bile ducts.

- (xii) Cancer of the gall bladder.
- (xiii) Primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated).
- (xiv) Cancer of the salivary gland.
- (xv) Cancer of the urinary tract.
- (xvi) Bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma.
- (xvii) Cancer of the bone.
- (xviii) Cancer of the brain.
- (xix) Cancer of the colon.
- (xx) Cancer of the lung.
- (xxi) Cancer of the ovary.

NOTE: For the purposes of this section, the term "urinary tract" means the kidneys, renal pelvis, ureters, urinary bladder, and urethra.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112(c)(2))

(3) For purposes of this section:

(i) The term *radiation-exposed veteran* means either a veteran who while serving on active duty, or an individual who while a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces during a period of active duty for training or inactive duty training, participated in a radiation-risk activity.

(ii) The term *radiation-risk activity* means:

(A) Onsite participation in a test involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear device.

(B) The occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces during the period beginning on August 6, 1945, and ending on July 1, 1946.

(C) Internment as a prisoner of war in Japan (or service on active duty in Japan immediately following such internment) during World War II which resulted in an opportunity for exposure to ionizing radiation comparable to that of the United States occupation forces in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, during the period beginning on August 6, 1945, and ending on July 1, 1946.

(D)(I) Service in which the service member was, as part of his or her official military duties, present during a total of at least 250 days before February 1, 1992, on the grounds of a gaseous diffusion plant located in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio, or the area identified as K25 at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, if, during such service the veteran:

- (i) Was monitored for each of the 250 days of such service through the use of

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dosimetry badges for exposure at the plant of the external parts of veteran's body to radiation; or

(ii) Served for each of the 250 days of such service in a position that had exposures comparable to a job that is or was monitored through the use of dosimetry badges; or

(2) Service before January 1, 1974, on Amchitka Island, Alaska, if, during such service, the veteran was exposed to ionizing radiation in the performance of duty related to the Long Shot, Milrow, or Cannikin underground nuclear tests.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (d)(3)(ii)(D)(1) of this section, the term "day" refers to all or any portion of a calendar day.

(E) Service in a capacity which, if performed as an employee of the Department of Energy, would qualify the individual for inclusion as a member of the Special Exposure Cohort under section 3621(14) of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 7384l(14)).

(iii) The term *atmospheric detonation* includes underwater nuclear detonations.

(iv) The term *onsite participation* means:

(A) During the official operational period of an atmospheric nuclear test, presence at the test site, or performance of official military duties in connection with ships, aircraft or other equipment used in direct support of the nuclear test.

(B) During the six month period following the official operational period of an atmospheric nuclear test, presence at the test site or other test staging area to perform official military duties in connection with completion of projects related to the nuclear test including decontamination of equipment used during the nuclear test.

(C) Service as a member of the garrison or maintenance forces on Eniwetok during the periods June 21, 1951, through July 1, 1952, August 7, 1956, through August 7, 1957, or November 1, 1958, through April 30, 1959.

(D) Assignment to official military duties at Naval Shipyards involving the decontamination of ships that participated in Operation Crossroads.

(v) For tests conducted by the United States, the term *operational period* means:

(A) For Operation *TRINITY* the period July 16, 1945 through August 6, 1945.

(B) For Operation *CROSSROADS* the period July 1, 1946 through August 31, 1946.

(C) For Operation *SANDSTONE* the period April 15, 1948 through May 20, 1948.

(D) For Operation *RANGER* the period January 27, 1951 through February 6, 1951.

(E) For Operation *GREENHOUSE* the period April 8, 1951 through June 20, 1951.

(F) For Operation *BUSTER-JANGLE* the period October 22, 1951 through December 20, 1951.

(G) For Operation *TUMBLER-SNAPPER* the period April 1, 1952 through June 20, 1952.

(H) For Operation *IVY* the period November 1, 1952 through December 31, 1952.

(I) For Operation *UPSHOT-KNOT-HOLE* the period March 17, 1953 through June 20, 1953.

(J) For Operation *CASTLE* the period March 1, 1954 through May 31, 1954.

(K) For Operation *TEAPOT* the period February 18, 1955 through June 10, 1955.

(L) For Operation *WIGWAM* the period May 14, 1955 through May 15, 1955.

(M) For Operation *REDWING* the period May 5, 1956 through August 6, 1956.

(N) For Operation *PLUMBBOB* the period May 28, 1957 through October 22, 1957.

(O) For Operation *HARDTACK I* the period April 28, 1958 through October 31, 1958.

(P) For Operation *ARGUS* the period August 27, 1958 through September 10, 1958.

(Q) For Operation *HARDTACK II* the period September 19, 1958 through October 31, 1958.

(R) For Operation *DOMINIC I* the period April 25, 1962 through December 31, 1962.

(S) For Operation *DOMINIC II/PLOW-SHARE* the period July 6, 1962 through August 15, 1962.

(vi) The term "occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces" means official military

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duties within 10 miles of the city limits of either Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, which were required to perform or support military occupation functions such as occupation of territory, control of the population, stabilization of the government, demilitarization of the Japanese military, rehabilitation of the infrastructure or deactivation and conversion of war plants or materials.

(vii) Former prisoners of war who had an opportunity for exposure to ionizing radiation comparable to that of veterans who participated in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces shall include those who, at any time during the period August 6, 1945, through July 1, 1946:

(A) Were interned within 75 miles of the city limits of Hiroshima or within 150 miles of the city limits of Nagasaki, or

(B) Can affirmatively show they worked within the areas set forth in paragraph (d)(3)(vii)(A) of this section although not interned within those areas, or

(C) Served immediately following internment in a capacity which satisfies the definition in paragraph (d)(3)(vi) of this section, or

(D) Were repatriated through the port of Nagasaki.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1110, 1112, 1131)

(e) *Disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents.* If a veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service, the following diseases shall be service-connected if the requirements of § 3.307(a)(6) are met even though there is no record of such disease during service, provided further that the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307(d) are also satisfied.

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne
- Type 2 diabetes (also known as Type II diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes)
- Hodgkin's disease
- Ischemic heart disease (including, but not limited to, acute, subacute, and old myocardial infarction; atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease including coronary artery disease (including coronary spasm) and

- coronary bypass surgery; and stable, unstable and Prinzmetal's angina)
- All chronic B-cell leukemias (including, but not limited to, hairy-cell leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia)
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease
- Early-onset peripheral neuropathy
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

NOTE 1: The term "soft-tissue sarcoma" includes the following:

- Adult fibrosarcoma
- Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans
- Malignant fibrous histiocytoma
- Liposarcoma
- Leiomyosarcoma
- Epithelioid leiomyosarcoma (malignant leiomyoblastoma)
- Rhabdomyosarcoma
- Ectomesenchymoma
- Angiosarcoma (hemangiosarcoma and lymphangiosarcoma)
- Proliferating (systemic) angioendotheliomatosis
- Malignant glomus tumor
- Malignant hemangiopericytoma
- Synovial sarcoma (malignant synovioma)
- Malignant giant cell tumor of tendon sheath
- Malignant schwannoma, including malignant schwannoma with rhabdomyoblastic differentiation (malignant Triton tumor), glandular and epithelioid malignant schwannomas
- Malignant mesenchymoma
- Malignant granular cell tumor
- Alveolar soft part sarcoma
- Epithelioid sarcoma
- Clear cell sarcoma of tendons and aponeuroses
- Extraskeletal Ewing's sarcoma
- Congenital and infantile fibrosarcoma
- Malignant ganglioneuroma

NOTE 2: For purposes of this section, the term ischemic heart disease does not include hypertension or peripheral manifestations of arteriosclerosis such as peripheral vascular disease or stroke, or any other condition that does not qualify within the generally accepted medical definition of Ischemic heart disease.

(f) *Disease associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune.* If a veteran, or former reservist or member of the National Guard, was exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune during military service and the exposure meets the requirements of § 3.307(a)(7),

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the following diseases shall be service-connected even though there is no record of such disease during service, subject to the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307(d).

- (1) Kidney cancer.
- (2) Liver cancer.
- (3) Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- (4) Adult leukemia.
- (5) Multiple myeloma.
- (6) Parkinson's disease.
- (7) Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes.
- (8) Bladder cancer.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a) and 1112(b))

[41 FR 55873, Dec. 23, 1976]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.309, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.310 Disabilities that are proximately due to, or aggravated by, service-connected disease or injury.

(a) *General.* Except as provided in § 3.300(c), disability which is proximately due to or the result of a service-connected disease or injury shall be service connected. When service connection is thus established for a secondary condition, the secondary condition shall be considered a part of the original condition.

(b) *Aggravation of nonservice-connected disabilities.* Any increase in severity of a nonservice-connected disease or injury that is proximately due to or the result of a service-connected disease or injury, and not due to the natural progress of the nonservice-connected disease, will be service connected. However, VA will not concede that a nonservice-connected disease or injury was aggravated by a service-connected disease or injury unless the baseline level of severity of the nonservice-connected disease or injury is established by medical evidence created before the onset of aggravation or by the earliest medical evidence created at any time between the onset of aggravation and the receipt of medical evidence establishing the current level of severity of the nonservice-connected disease or injury. The rating activity will determine the baseline and current levels of severity under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (38 CFR part 4) and deter-

mine the extent of aggravation by deducting the baseline level of severity, as well as any increase in severity due to the natural progress of the disease, from the current level.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1110 and 1131)

(c) *Cardiovascular disease.* Ischemic heart disease or other cardiovascular disease developing in a veteran who has a service-connected amputation of one lower extremity at or above the knee or service-connected amputations of both lower extremities at or above the ankles, shall be held to be the proximate result of the service-connected amputation or amputations.

(d) *Traumatic brain injury.* (1) In a veteran who has a service-connected traumatic brain injury, the following shall be held to be the proximate result of the service-connected traumatic brain injury (TBI), in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary:

(i) Parkinsonism, including Parkinson's disease, following moderate or severe TBI;

(ii) Unprovoked seizures following moderate or severe TBI;

(iii) Dementias of the following types: presenile dementia of the Alzheimer type, frontotemporal dementia, and dementia with Lewy bodies, if manifest within 15 years following moderate or severe TBI;

(iv) Depression if manifest within 3 years of moderate or severe TBI, or within 12 months of mild TBI; or

(v) Diseases of hormone deficiency that result from hypothalamo-pituitary changes if manifest within 12 months of moderate or severe TBI.

(2) Neither the severity levels nor the time limits in paragraph (d)(1) of this section preclude a finding of service connection for conditions shown by evidence to be proximately due to service-connected TBI. If a claim does not meet the requirements of paragraph (d)(1) with respect to the time of manifestation or the severity of the TBI, or both, VA will develop and decide the claim under generally applicable principles of service connection without regard to paragraph (d)(1).

(3)(i) For purposes of this section VA will use the following table for determining the severity of a TBI:

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Normal structural imaging LOC = 0-30 min	Normal or abnormal structural imaging ... LOC > 30 min and < 24 hours	Normal or abnormal structural imaging. LOC > 24 hrs.
AOC = a moment up to 24 hrs	AOC > 24 hours. Severity based on other criteria.	
PTA = 0-1 day GCS = 13-15	PTA > 1 and < 7 days GCS = 9-12	PTA > 7 days. GCS = 3-8.

NOTE: The factors considered are:

Structural imaging of the brain.

LOC—Loss of consciousness.

AOC—Alteration of consciousness/mental state.

PTA—Post-traumatic amnesia.

GCS—Glasgow Coma Scale. (For purposes of injury stratification, the Glasgow Coma Scale is measured at or after 24 hours.)

(ii) The determination of the severity level under this paragraph is based on the TBI symptoms at the time of injury or shortly thereafter, rather than the current level of functioning. VA will not require that the TBI meet all the criteria listed under a certain severity level in order to classify the TBI at that severity level. If a TBI meets the criteria in more than one category of severity, then VA will rank the TBI at the highest level in which a criterion is met, except where the qualifying criterion is the same at both levels.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1110 and 1131)

[44 FR 50340, Aug. 28, 1979, as amended at 66 FR 18198, Apr. 6, 2001; 71 FR 52747, Sept. 7, 2006; 78 FR 76208, Dec. 17, 2013]

§3.311 Claims based on exposure to ionizing radiation.

(a) *Determinations of exposure and dose*—(1) *Dose assessment*. In all claims in which it is established that a radiogenic disease first became manifest after service and was not manifest to a compensable degree within any applicable presumptive period as specified in §3.307 or §3.309, and it is contended the disease is a result of exposure to ionizing radiation in service, an assessment will be made as to the size and nature of the radiation dose or doses. When dose estimates provided pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section are reported as a range of doses to which a veteran may have been exposed, exposure at the highest level of

the dose range reported will be presumed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) *Request for dose information*. Where necessary pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section, dose information will be requested as follows:

(i) *Atmospheric nuclear weapons test participation claims*. In claims based upon participation in atmospheric nuclear testing, dose data will in all cases be requested from the appropriate office of the Department of Defense.

(ii) *Hiroshima and Nagasaki occupation claims*. In all claims based on participation in the American occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, prior to July 1, 1946, dose data will be requested from the Department of Defense.

(iii) *Other exposure claims*. In all other claims involving radiation exposure, a request will be made for any available records concerning the veteran's exposure to radiation. These records normally include but may not be limited to the veteran's Record of Occupational Exposure to Ionizing Radiation (DD Form 1141), if maintained, service medical records, and other records which may contain information pertaining to the veteran's radiation dose in service. All such records will be forwarded to the Under Secretary for Health, who will be responsible for preparation of a dose estimate, to the extent feasible, based on available methodologies.

(3) *Referral to independent expert*. When necessary to reconcile a material difference between an estimate of dose, from a credible source, submitted by or on behalf of a claimant, and dose data derived from official military records, the estimates and supporting documentation shall be referred to an independent expert, selected by the Director of the National Institutes of Health, who shall prepare a separate

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radiation dose estimate for consideration in adjudication of the claim. For purposes of this paragraph:

(i) The difference between the claimant's estimate and dose data derived from official military records shall ordinarily be considered material if one estimate is at least double the other estimate.

(ii) A dose estimate shall be considered from a "credible source" if prepared by a person or persons certified by an appropriate professional body in the field of health physics, nuclear medicine or radiology and if based on analysis of the facts and circumstances of the particular claim.

(4) *Exposure.* In cases described in paragraph (a)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section:

(i) If military records do not establish presence at or absence from a site at which exposure to radiation is claimed to have occurred, the veteran's presence at the site will be conceded.

(ii) Neither the veteran nor the veteran's survivors may be required to produce evidence substantiating exposure if the information in the veteran's service records or other records maintained by the Department of Defense is consistent with the claim that the veteran was present where and when the claimed exposure occurred.

(b) *Initial review of claims.* (1) When it is determined:

(i) A veteran was exposed to ionizing radiation as a result of participation in the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, from September 1945 until July 1946, or other activities as claimed;

(ii) The veteran subsequently developed a radiogenic disease; and

(iii) Such disease first became manifest within the period specified in paragraph (b)(5) of this section; before its adjudication the claim will be referred to the Under Secretary for Benefits for further consideration in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section. If any of the foregoing 3 requirements has not been met, it shall not be determined that a disease has resulted from exposure to ionizing radiation under such circumstances.

(2) For purposes of this section the term "radiogenic disease" means a dis-

ease that may be induced by ionizing radiation and shall include the following:

(i) All forms of leukemia except chronic lymphatic (lymphocytic) leukemia;

(ii) Thyroid cancer;

(iii) Breast cancer;

(iv) Lung cancer;

(v) Bone cancer;

(vi) Liver cancer;

(vii) Skin cancer;

(viii) Esophageal cancer;

(ix) Stomach cancer;

(x) Colon cancer;

(xi) Pancreatic cancer;

(xii) Kidney cancer;

(xiii) Urinary bladder cancer;

(xiv) Salivary gland cancer;

(xv) Multiple myeloma;

(xvi) Posterior subcapsular cataracts;

(xvii) Non-malignant thyroid nodular disease;

(xviii) Ovarian cancer;

(xix) Parathyroid adenoma;

(xx) Tumors of the brain and central nervous system;

(xxi) Cancer of the rectum;

(xxii) Lymphomas other than Hodgkin's disease;

(xxiii) Prostate cancer; and

(xxiv) Any other cancer.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) Public Law 98-542 requires VA to determine whether sound medical and scientific evidence supports establishing a rule identifying polycythemia vera as a radiogenic disease. VA has determined that sound medical and scientific evidence does not support including polycythemia vera on the list of known radiogenic diseases in this regulation. Even so, VA will consider a claim based on the assertion that polycythemia vera is a radiogenic disease under the provisions of paragraph (b)(4) of this section.

(Authority: Pub. L. 98-542, section 5(b)(2)(A)(i), (iii)).

(4) If a claim is based on a disease other than one of those listed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, VA shall nevertheless consider the claim under the provisions of this section provided that the claimant has cited or submitted competent scientific or medical

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evidence that the claimed condition is a radiogenic disease.

(5) For the purposes of paragraph (b)(1) of this section:

(i) Bone cancer must become manifest within 30 years after exposure;

(ii) Leukemia may become manifest at any time after exposure;

(iii) Posterior subcapsular cataracts must become manifest 6 months or more after exposure; and

(iv) Other diseases specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section must become manifest 5 years or more after exposure.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; Pub. L. 98-542)

(c) *Review by Under Secretary for Benefits.* (1) When a claim is forwarded for review pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall consider the claim with reference to the factors specified in paragraph (e) of this section and may request an advisory medical opinion from the Under Secretary for Health.

(i) If after such consideration the Under Secretary for Benefits is convinced sound scientific and medical evidence supports the conclusion it is at least as likely as not the veteran's disease resulted from exposure to radiation in service, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall so inform the regional office of jurisdiction in writing. The Under Secretary for Benefits shall set forth the rationale for this conclusion, including an evaluation of the claim under the applicable factors specified in paragraph (e) of this section.

(ii) If the Under Secretary for Benefits determines there is no reasonable possibility that the veteran's disease resulted from radiation exposure in service, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall so inform the regional office of jurisdiction in writing, setting forth the rationale for this conclusion.

(2) If the Under Secretary for Benefits, after considering any opinion of the Under Secretary for Health, is unable to conclude whether it is at least as likely as not, or that there is no reasonable possibility, the veteran's disease resulted from radiation exposure in service, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall refer the matter to an

outside consultant in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (c)(1) of this section, "sound scientific evidence" means observations, findings, or conclusions which are statistically and epidemiologically valid, are statistically significant, are capable of replication, and withstand peer review, and "sound medical evidence" means observations, findings, or conclusions which are consistent with current medical knowledge and are so reasonable and logical as to serve as the basis of management of a medical condition.

(d) *Referral to outside consultants.* (1) Referrals pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section shall be to consultants selected by the Under Secretary for Health from outside VA, upon the recommendation of the Director of the National Cancer Institute. The consultant will be asked to evaluate the claim and provide an opinion as to the likelihood the disease is a result of exposure as claimed.

(2) The request for opinion shall be in writing and shall include a description of:

(i) The disease, including the specific cell type and stage, if known, and when the disease first became manifest;

(ii) The circumstances, including date, of the veteran's exposure;

(iii) The veteran's age, gender, and pertinent family history;

(iv) The veteran's history of exposure to known carcinogens, occupationally or otherwise;

(v) Evidence of any other effects radiation exposure may have had on the veteran; and

(vi) Any other information relevant to determination of causation of the veteran's disease.

The Under Secretary for Benefits shall forward, with the request, copies of pertinent medical records and, where available, dose assessments from official sources, from credible sources as defined in paragraph (a)(3)(ii) of this section, and from an independent expert pursuant to paragraph (a)(3) of this section.

(3) The consultant shall evaluate the claim under the factors specified in paragraph (e) of this section and respond in writing, stating whether it is

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either likely, unlikely, or approximately as likely as not the veteran's disease resulted from exposure to ionizing radiation in service. The response shall set forth the rationale for the consultant's conclusion, including the consultant's evaluation under the applicable factors specified in paragraph (e) of this section. The Under Secretary for Benefits shall review the consultant's response and transmit it with any comments to the regional office of jurisdiction for use in adjudication of the claim.

(e) *Factors for consideration.* Factors to be considered in determining whether a veteran's disease resulted from exposure to ionizing radiation in service include:

(1) The probable dose, in terms of dose type, rate and duration as a factor in inducing the disease, taking into account any known limitations in the dosimetry devices employed in its measurement or the methodologies employed in its estimation;

(2) The relative sensitivity of the involved tissue to induction, by ionizing radiation, of the specific pathology;

(3) The veteran's gender and pertinent family history;

(4) The veteran's age at time of exposure;

(5) The time-lapse between exposure and onset of the disease; and

(6) The extent to which exposure to radiation, or other carcinogens, outside of service may have contributed to development of the disease.

(f) *Adjudication of claim.* The determination of service connection will be made under the generally applicable provisions of this part, giving due consideration to all evidence of record, including any opinion provided by the Under Secretary for Health or an outside consultant, and to the evaluations published pursuant to §1.17 of this title. With regard to any issue material to consideration of a claim, the provisions of §3.102 of this title apply.

(g) *Willful misconduct and supervening cause.* In no case will service connection be established if the disease is due to the veteran's own willful misconduct, or if there is affirmative evidence to establish that a supervening,

nonservice-related condition or event is more likely the cause of the disease.

(Authority: Pub. L. 98-542)

[50 FR 34459, Aug. 26, 1985, as amended at 54 FR 42803, Oct. 18, 1989; 58 FR 16359, Mar. 26, 1993. Redesignated at 59 FR 5107, Feb. 3, 1994, and amended at 59 FR 45975, Sept. 6, 1994; 60 FR 9628, Feb. 21, 1995; 60 FR 53277, Oct. 13, 1995; 63 FR 50994, Sept. 24, 1998; 67 FR 6871, Feb. 14, 2002]

§3.312 Cause of death.

(a) *General.* The death of a veteran will be considered as having been due to a service-connected disability when the evidence establishes that such disability was either the principal or a contributory cause of death. The issue involved will be determined by exercise of sound judgment, without recourse to speculation, after a careful analysis has been made of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of the veteran, including, particularly, autopsy reports.

(b) *Principal cause of death.* The service-connected disability will be considered as the principal (primary) cause of death when such disability, singly or jointly with some other condition, was the immediate or underlying cause of death or was etiologically related thereto.

(c) *Contributory cause of death.* (1) Contributory cause of death is inherently one not related to the principal cause. In determining whether the service-connected disability contributed to death, it must be shown that it contributed substantially or materially; that it combined to cause death; that it aided or lent assistance to the production of death. It is not sufficient to show that it casually shared in producing death, but rather it must be shown that there was a causal connection.

(2) Generally, minor service-connected disabilities, particularly those of a static nature or not materially affecting a vital organ, would not be held to have contributed to death primarily due to unrelated disability. In the same category there would be included service-connected disease or injuries of any evaluation (even though evaluated as

100 percent disabling) but of a quiescent or static nature involving muscular or skeletal functions and not materially affecting other vital body functions.

(3) Service-connected diseases or injuries involving active processes affecting vital organs should receive careful consideration as a contributory cause of death, the primary cause being unrelated, from the viewpoint of whether there were resulting debilitating effects and general impairment of health to an extent that would render the person materially less capable of resisting the effects of other disease or injury primarily causing death. Where the service-connected condition affects vital organs as distinguished from muscular or skeletal functions and is evaluated as 100 percent disabling, debilitation may be assumed.

(4) There are primary causes of death which by their very nature are so overwhelming that eventual death can be anticipated irrespective of coexisting conditions, but, even in such cases, there is for consideration whether there may be a reasonable basis for holding that a service-connected condition was of such severity as to have a material influence in accelerating death. In this situation, however, it would not generally be reasonable to hold that a service-connected condition accelerated death unless such condition affected a vital organ and was of itself of a progressive or debilitating nature.

CROSS REFERENCES: Reasonable doubt. See § 3.102. Service connection for mental unsoundness in suicide. See § 3.302.

[26 FR 1582, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 54 FR 34981, Aug. 23, 1989; 54 FR 42803, Oct. 18, 1989]

§ 3.313 Claims based on service in Vietnam.

(a) *Service in Vietnam.* Service in Vietnam includes service in the waters offshore, or service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in Vietnam.

(b) *Service connection based on service in Vietnam.* Service in Vietnam during the Vietnam Era together with the development of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma manifested subsequent to such service

is sufficient to establish service connection for that disease.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[55 FR 43124, Oct. 26, 1990]

§ 3.314 Basic pension determinations.

(a) *Prior to the Mexican border period.* While pensions are granted based on certain service prior to the Mexican border period, the only rating factors in claims therefor are:

(1) Claims based on service of less than 90 days in the Spanish-American War require a rating determination as to whether the veteran was discharged or released from service for a service-connected disability or had at the time of separation from service a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have warranted a discharge for disability. Eligibility in such cases requires a finding that the disability was incurred in or aggravated by service in line of duty without benefit of presumptive provisions of law or Department of Veterans Affairs regulations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1512)

(2) Veterans entitled to pension on the basis of service in the Spanish-American War may be entitled to an increased rate of pension if rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance. Veterans who have elected pension under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) who are not rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance may be entitled to increased pension based on 100 percent permanent disability together with independent disability of 60 percent or more or by reason of being permanently housebound as provided in § 3.351 (d).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502 (b), (c), 512)

(b) *Mexican border period and later war periods.* Non-service-connected disability and death pension may be paid based on service in the Mexican border period, World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict and the Vietnam era. Rating determinations in such claims will be required in the following situations:

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(1) Claims based on service of less than 90 days may require a determination as to whether the veteran was discharged or released from service for a service-connected disability or had at the time of separation from service a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have warranted a discharge for disability. Eligibility in such cases requires a finding that the disability was incurred in or aggravated by service in line of duty without benefit of presumptive provisions of law or Department of Veterans Affairs regulations (38 U.S.C. 1521(g)(2)) unless, in the case of death pension, the veteran was, at the time of death, receiving (or entitled to receive) compensation or retirement pay based upon a wartime service-connected disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(a) and 1542(a))

(2) Determinations of permanent total disability for pension purposes will be based on non-service-connected disability or combined non-service-connected and service-connected disabilities not the result of willful misconduct. However, for pension under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432), permanent and total disability will be presumed where the veteran has attained age 65 or effective January 1, 1977, where the veteran became unemployable after age 65.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a), 1523(a))

(3) Veterans entitled to nonservice-connected disability pension may be entitled to an increased rate of pension if rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance. Veterans entitled to protected pension or pension under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) who are not rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance may be entitled to increased pension based on a 100 percent permanent disability together with independent disability of 60 percent or more or by reason of being permanently housebound as provided in §3.351 (d) or (e).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502 (b), (c), 1521)

[31 FR 4680, Mar. 19, 1966, as amended at 32 FR 13224, Sept. 19, 1967; 36 FR 8446, May 6, 1971; 40 FR 56434, Dec. 3, 1975; 41 FR 56804, Dec. 30, 1976; 61 FR 20438, May 7, 1996]

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§3.315 Basic eligibility determinations; dependents, loans, education.

(a) *Child over 18 years.* A child of a veteran may be considered a "child" after age 18 for purposes of benefits under title 38, United States Code (except ch. 19 and sec. 8502(b) of ch. 85), if found by a rating determination to have become, prior to age 18, permanently incapable of self-support.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(B))

(b) *Loans.* If a veteran of World War II the Korean conflict or the Vietnam era had less than 90 days of service, or if a veteran who served after July 25, 1947, and prior to June 27, 1950, or after January 31, 1955, and prior to August 5, 1964, or after May 7, 1975, has less than 181 days of service on active duty as defined in §§36.4301 and 36.4501, eligibility of the veteran for a loan under 38 U.S.C. ch. 37 requires a determination that the veteran was discharged or released because of a service-connected disability or that the official service department records show that he or she had at the time of separation from service a service-connected disability which in medical judgment would have warranted a discharge for disability. These determinations are subject to the presumption of incurrence under §3.304(b). Determinations based on World War II, Korean conflict and Vietnam era service are also subject to the presumption of aggravation under §3.306(b) while determination based on service on or after February 1, 1955, and before August 5, 1964, or after May 7, 1975, are subject to the presumption of aggravation under §3.306 (a) and (c). The provisions of this paragraph are also applicable, regardless of length of service, in determining eligibility to the maximum period of entitlement based on discharge or release for a service-connected disability. (See also the minimum service requirements of §3.12a.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3702, 3707)

(c) *Veterans' educational assistance.* (1) A determination is required as to whether a veteran was discharged or released from active duty service because of a service-connected disability

(or whether the official service department records show that the veteran had at time of separation from service a service-connected disability which in medical judgment would have warranted discharge for disability) whenever any of the following circumstances exist:

(i) The veteran applies for benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 32, the minimum active duty service requirements of 38 U.S.C. 5303A apply to him or her, and the veteran would be eligible for such benefits only if—

(A) He or she was discharged or released from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, or

(B) He or she has a disability that VA has determined to be compensable under 38 U.S.C. chapter 11; or

(ii) The veteran applies for benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 30 and—

(A) The evidence of record does not clearly show either that the veteran was discharged or released from active duty for disability or that the veteran's discharge or release from active duty was unrelated to disability, and

(B) The veteran is eligible for basic educational assistance except for the minimum length of active duty service requirements of §21.7042(a) or §21.7044(a) of this chapter.

(2) A determination is required as to whether a veteran was discharged or released from service in the Selected Reserve for a service-connected disability or for a medical condition which preexisted the veteran's having become a member of the Selected Reserve and which VA determines is not service connected when the veteran applies for benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 30 and—

(i) Either the veteran would be eligible for basic educational assistance under that chapter only if he or she was discharged from the Selected Reserve for a service-connected disability, or for a medical condition which preexisted the veteran's having become a member of the Selected Reserve and which VA finds is not service connected, or

(ii) The veteran is entitled to basic educational assistance and would be entitled to receive it at the rates stated in §21.7136(a) or §21.7137(a) of this

chapter only if he or she was discharged from the Selected Reserve for a service-connected disability or for a medical condition which preexisted the veteran's having become a member of the Selected Reserve and which VA finds is not service connected.

(3) A determination is required as to whether a reservist has been unable to pursue a program of education due to a disability which has been incurred in or aggravated by service in the Selected Reserve when—

(i) The reservist is otherwise entitled to educational assistance under 10 U.S.C. chapter 1606, and

(ii) He or she applies for an extension of his or her eligibility period.

(4) The determinations required by paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) of this section are subject to the presumptions of incurrence under §3.304(b) and aggravation under §3.306 (a) and (c) of this part, based on service rendered after May 7, 1975.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3011(a)(1)(A)(ii), 3012(b)(1), 3202(1)(A), 10 U.S.C. 16133(b))

[38 FR 871, Jan. 5, 1973, as amended at 42 FR 22869, May 5, 1977; 50 FR 53315, Dec. 31, 1985; 51 FR 1510, Jan. 14, 1986; 55 FR 25974, June 26, 1990; 61 FR 67950, Dec. 26, 1996]

§3.316 Claims based on chronic effects of exposure to mustard gas and Lewisite.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, exposure to the specified vesicant agents during active military service under the circumstances described below together with the subsequent development of any of the indicated conditions is sufficient to establish service connection for that condition:

(1) Full-body exposure to nitrogen or sulfur mustard during active military service together with the subsequent development of chronic conjunctivitis, keratitis, corneal opacities, scar formation, or the following cancers: Nasopharyngeal; laryngeal; lung (except mesothelioma); or squamous cell carcinoma of the skin.

(2) Full-body exposure to nitrogen or sulfur mustard or Lewisite during active military service together with the subsequent development of a chronic

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form of laryngitis, bronchitis, emphysema, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

(3) Full-body exposure to nitrogen mustard during active military service together with the subsequent development of acute nonlymphocytic leukemia.

(b) Service connection will not be established under this section if the claimed condition is due to the veteran's own willful misconduct (See §3.301(c)) or there is affirmative evidence that establishes a nonservice-related supervening condition or event as the cause of the claimed condition (See §3.303).

[59 FR 42499, Aug. 18, 1994]

§3.317 Compensation for certain disabilities occurring in Persian Gulf veterans.

(a) *Compensation for disability due to undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses.*

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(7) of this section, VA will pay compensation in accordance with chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, to a Persian Gulf veteran who exhibits objective indications of a qualifying chronic disability, provided that such disability:

(i) Became manifest either during active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, or to a degree of 10 percent or more not later than December 31, 2021; and

(ii) By history, physical examination, and laboratory tests cannot be attributed to any known clinical diagnosis.

(2)(i) For purposes of this section, a *qualifying chronic disability* means a chronic disability resulting from any of the following (or any combination of the following):

(A) An undiagnosed illness;

(B) A medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness that is defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms, such as:

(1) Chronic fatigue syndrome;

(2) Fibromyalgia;

(3) Functional gastrointestinal disorders (excluding structural gastrointestinal diseases).

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (a)(2)(i)(B)(3): Functional gastrointestinal disorders are a group

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of conditions characterized by chronic or recurrent symptoms that are unexplained by any structural, endoscopic, laboratory, or other objective signs of injury or disease and may be related to any part of the gastrointestinal tract. Specific functional gastrointestinal disorders include, but are not limited to, irritable bowel syndrome, functional dyspepsia, functional vomiting, functional constipation, functional bloating, functional abdominal pain syndrome, and functional dysphagia. These disorders are commonly characterized by symptoms including abdominal pain, substernal burning or pain, nausea, vomiting, altered bowel habits (including diarrhea, constipation), indigestion, bloating, postprandial fullness, and painful or difficult swallowing. Diagnosis of specific functional gastrointestinal disorders is made in accordance with established medical principles, which generally require symptom onset at least 6 months prior to diagnosis and the presence of symptoms sufficient to diagnose the specific disorder at least 3 months prior to diagnosis.

(ii) For purposes of this section, the term *medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness* means a diagnosed illness without conclusive pathophysiology or etiology, that is characterized by overlapping symptoms and signs and has features such as fatigue, pain, disability out of proportion to physical findings, and inconsistent demonstration of laboratory abnormalities. Chronic multisymptom illnesses of partially understood etiology and pathophysiology, such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis, will not be considered medically unexplained.

(3) For purposes of this section, "objective indications of chronic disability" include both "signs," in the medical sense of objective evidence perceptible to an examining physician, and other, non-medical indicators that are capable of independent verification.

(4) For purposes of this section, disabilities that have existed for 6 months or more and disabilities that exhibit intermittent episodes of improvement and worsening over a 6-month period will be considered chronic. The 6-month period of chronicity will be measured from the earliest date on which the pertinent evidence establishes that the signs or symptoms of the disability first became manifest.

(5) A qualifying chronic disability referred to in this section shall be rated using evaluation criteria from part 4 of this chapter for a disease or injury in

which the functions affected, anatomical localization, or symptomatology are similar.

(6) A qualifying chronic disability referred to in this section shall be considered service connected for purposes of all laws of the United States.

(7) Compensation shall not be paid under this section for a chronic disability:

(i) If there is affirmative evidence that the disability was not incurred during active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; or

(ii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disability was caused by a supervening condition or event that occurred between the veteran's most recent departure from active duty in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and the onset of the disability; or

(iii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disability is the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct or the abuse of alcohol or drugs.

(b) *Signs or symptoms of undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses.* For the purposes of paragraph (a)(1) of this section, signs or symptoms which may be manifestations of undiagnosed illness or medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Fatigue.
- (2) Signs or symptoms involving skin.
- (3) Headache.
- (4) Muscle pain.
- (5) Joint pain.
- (6) Neurological signs or symptoms.
- (7) Neuropsychological signs or symptoms.
- (8) Signs or symptoms involving the respiratory system (upper or lower).
- (9) Sleep disturbances.
- (10) Gastrointestinal signs or symptoms.
- (11) Cardiovascular signs or symptoms.
- (12) Abnormal weight loss.
- (13) Menstrual disorders.

(c) *Presumptive service connection for infectious diseases.* (1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(4) of this section, a disease listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section will be service connected if it becomes manifest in a veteran with a qualifying period of serv-

ice, provided the provisions of paragraph (c)(3) of this section are also satisfied.

(2) The diseases referred to in paragraph (c)(1) of this section are the following:

- (i) Brucellosis.
- (ii) *Campylobacter jejuni*.
- (iii) *Coxiella burnetii* (Q fever).
- (iv) Malaria.
- (v) *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.
- (vi) Nontyphoid *Salmonella*.
- (vii) *Shigella*.
- (viii) Visceral leishmaniasis.
- (ix) West Nile virus.

(3) The diseases listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section will be considered to have been incurred in or aggravated by service under the circumstances outlined in paragraphs (c)(3)(i) and (ii) of this section even though there is no evidence of such disease during the period of service.

(i) With three exceptions, the disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from the date of separation from a qualifying period of service as specified in paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section. Malaria must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from the date of separation from a qualifying period of service or at a time when standard or accepted treaties indicate that the incubation period commenced during a qualifying period of service. There is no time limit for visceral leishmaniasis or tuberculosis to have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more.

(ii) For purposes of this paragraph (c), the term *qualifying period of service* means a period of service meeting the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section or a period of active military, naval, or air service on or after September 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.

(4) A disease listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section shall not be presumed service connected:

(i) If there is affirmative evidence that the disease was not incurred during a qualifying period of service; or

(ii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disease was caused by a supervening condition or event that occurred between the veteran's most recent departure from a qualifying period

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of service and the onset of the disease; or

(iii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disease is the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct or the abuse of alcohol or drugs.

(d) *Long-term health effects potentially associated with infectious diseases.* (1) A report of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences has identified the following long-term health effects that potentially are associated with the infectious diseases listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section. These health effects and diseases are listed alphabetically and are not categorized by the level of association stated in the National Academy of Sciences report (see Table to §3.317). If a veteran who has or had an infectious disease identified in column A also has a condition identified in column B as potentially related to that infectious

disease, VA must determine, based on the evidence in each case, whether the column B condition was caused by the infectious disease for purposes of paying disability compensation. This does not preclude a finding that other manifestations of disability or secondary conditions were caused by an infectious disease.

(2) If a veteran presumed service connected for one of the diseases listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section is diagnosed with one of the diseases listed in column "B" in the table within the time period specified for the disease in the same table, if a time period is specified or, otherwise, at any time, VA will request a medical opinion as to whether it is at least as likely as not that the condition was caused by the veteran having had the associated disease in column "A" in that same table.

TABLE TO §3.317—LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS POTENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

A	B Disease
<i>Brucellosis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthritis. • Cardiovascular, nervous, and respiratory system infections. • Chronic meningitis and meningoencephalitis. • Deafness. • Demyelinating meningovascular syndromes. • Episcleritis. • Fatigue, inattention, amnesia, and depression. • Guillain-Barré syndrome. • Hepatic abnormalities, including granulomatous hepatitis. • Multifocal choroiditis. • Myelitis-radiculoneuritis. • Nummular keratitis. • Papilledema. • Optic neuritis. • Orchioepididymitis and infections of the genitourinary system. • Sensorineural hearing loss. • Spondylitis. • Uveitis.
<i>Campylobacter jejuni</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guillain-Barré syndrome if manifest within 2 months of the infection. • Reactive Arthritis if manifest within 3 months of the infection. • Uveitis if manifest within 1 month of the infection.
<i>Coxiella burnetii</i> (Q fever)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic hepatitis. • Endocarditis. • Osteomyelitis. • Post-Q-fever chronic fatigue syndrome. • Vascular infection.
<i>Malaria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demyelinating polyneuropathy. • Guillain-Barré syndrome. • Hematologic manifestations (particularly anemia after falciparum malaria and splenic rupture after vivax malaria). • Immune-complex glomerulonephritis. • Neurologic disease, neuropsychiatric disease, or both. • Ophthalmologic manifestations, particularly retinal hemorrhage and scarring. • <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i>. • <i>Plasmodium malariae</i>. • <i>Plasmodium ovale</i>. • <i>Plasmodium vivax</i>. • Renal disease, especially nephrotic syndrome.
<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active tuberculosis.

TABLE TO § 3.317—LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS POTENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES—Continued

A	B
	Disease
<i>Nontyphoid Salmonella</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term adverse health outcomes due to irreversible tissue damage from severe forms of pulmonary and extrapulmonary tuberculosis and active tuberculosis. • Reactive Arthritis <i>if manifest within 3 months of the infection.</i> • Hemolytic-uremic syndrome <i>if manifest within 1 month of the infection.</i> • Reactive Arthritis <i>if manifest within 3 months of the infection.</i> • Delayed presentation of the acute clinical syndrome. • Post-kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis <i>if manifest within 2 years of the infection.</i> • Reactivation of visceral leishmaniasis in the context of future immunosuppression. • Variable physical, functional, or cognitive disability.
<i>Shigella</i>	
<i>Visceral leishmaniasis</i>	
<i>West Nile virus</i>	

(e) *Service.* For purposes of this section:

(1) The term *Persian Gulf veteran* means a veteran who served on active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.

(2) The *Southwest Asia theater of operations* refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1117, 1118)

[75 FR 59970, Sept. 29, 2010, as amended at 75 FR 61356, Oct. 5, 2010; 75 FR 61997, Oct. 7, 2010; 76 FR 41698, July 15, 2011; 76 FR 81836, Dec. 29, 2011; 81 FR 71384, Oct. 17, 2016]

§ 3.318 Presumptive service connection for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the development of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis manifested at any time after discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service is sufficient to establish service connection for that disease.

(b) Service connection will not be established under this section:

(1) If there is affirmative evidence that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis was not incurred during or aggravated by active military, naval, or air service;

(2) If there is affirmative evidence that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is due to the veteran’s own willful misconduct; or

(3) If the veteran did not have active, continuous service of 90 days or more.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a)(1))

[73 FR 54693, Sept. 23, 2008]

§§ 3.319–3.320 [Reserved]

CROSS REFERENCES:¹

Permanent and total disability ratings for pension purposes. See § 3.342. Special monthly dependency and indemnity compensation, death compensation and pension ratings. See § 3.351. Determination of permanent need for regular aid and attendance and “permanently bedridden.” See § 3.352. Conditions which determine permanent incapacity for self-support. See § 3.356.

§ 3.321 General rating considerations.

(a) *Use of rating schedule.* The 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities will be used for evaluating the degree of disabilities in claims for disability compensation, disability and death pension, and in eligibility determinations. The provisions contained in the rating schedule will represent as far as can practicably be determined, the average impairment in earning capacity in civil occupations resulting from disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(b) *Extra-schedular ratings in unusual cases—*(1) *Disability compensation.* Ratings shall be based, as far as practicable, upon the average impairments of earning capacity with the additional proviso that the Secretary shall from time to time readjust this schedule of ratings in accordance with experience. To accord justice to the exceptional case where the schedular evaluation is

¹39 FR 5315, Feb. 12, 1974.

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inadequate to rate a single service-connected disability, the Director of Compensation Service or his or her delegate is authorized to approve on the basis of the criteria set forth in this paragraph (b), an extra-schedular evaluation commensurate with the average impairment of earning capacity due exclusively to the disability. The governing norm in these exceptional cases is a finding by the Director of Compensation Service or delegatee that application of the regular schedular standards is impractical because the disability is so exceptional or unusual due to such related factors as marked interference with employment or frequent periods of hospitalization.

(2) *Pension.* Where the evidence of record establishes that an applicant for pension who is basically eligible fails to meet the disability requirements based on the percentage standards of the rating schedule but is found to be unemployable by reason of his or her disability(ies), age, occupational background and other related factors, the following are authorized to approve on an extra-schedular basis a permanent and total disability rating for pension purposes: the Veterans Service Center Manager or the Pension Management Center Manager; or where regular schedular standards are met as of the date of the rating decision, the rating board.

(3) *Effective dates.* The effective date of these extra-schedular evaluations granting or increasing benefits will be in accordance with § 3.400(b)(1) and (2) as to original and supplemental claims and in accordance with § 3.400(o) in claims for increased benefits.

(c) *Advisory opinion.* Cases in which application of the schedule is not understood or the propriety of an extra-schedular rating is questionable may be submitted to Central Office for advisory opinion.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates; disability benefits. See § 3.400(b). Effective dates; increases. See § 3.400(o).

[26 FR 1583, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 29 FR 1463, Jan. 29, 1964; 37 FR 10442, May 23, 1972; 39 FR 5315, Feb. 12, 1974; 39 FR 32988, Sept. 13, 1974; 40 FR 57459, Dec. 10, 1975; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996; 74 FR 26959, June 5, 2009; 79 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014; 82 FR 57835, Dec. 8, 2017; 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

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§ 3.322 Rating of disabilities aggravated by service.

(a) *Aggravation of preservice disability.* In cases involving aggravation by active service, the rating will reflect only the degree of disability over and above the degree of disability existing at the time of entrance into active service, whether the particular condition was noted at the time of entrance into active service, or whether it is determined upon the evidence of record to have existed at that time. It is necessary to deduct from the present evaluation the degree, if ascertainable, of the disability existing at the time of entrance into active service, in terms of the rating schedule except that if the disability is total (100 percent) no deduction will be made. If the degree of disability at the time of entrance into service is not ascertainable in terms of the schedule, no deduction will be made.

(b) *Aggravation of service-connected disability.* Where a disease or injury incurred in peacetime service is aggravated during service in a period of war, or conversely, where a disease or injury incurred in service during a period of war is aggravated during peacetime service, the entire disability flowing from the disease or injury will be service connected based on the war service.

CROSS REFERENCES: Principles relating to service connection. See § 3.303. Aggravation of preservice disability. See § 3.306.

[26 FR 1583, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.323 Combined ratings.

(a) *Compensation—(1) Same type of service.* When there are two or more service-connected compensable disabilities a combined evaluation will be made following the tables and rules prescribed in the 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities.

(2) *Wartime and peacetime service.* Evaluation of wartime and peacetime service-connected compensable disabilities will be combined to provide for the payment of wartime rates of compensation. (38 U.S.C. 1157) Effective July 1, 1973, it is immaterial whether the disabilities are wartime or peacetime service-connected since all disabilities are compensable under 38

U.S.C. 1114 and 1115 on and after that date.

(b) *Pension*—(1) *Nonservice-connected disabilities*. Evaluation of two or more nonservice-connected disabilities not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct will be combined as provided in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(2) *Service-connected and nonservice-connected disabilities*. Evaluations for service-connected disabilities may be combined with evaluations for disabilities not shown to be service connected and not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct.

CROSS REFERENCES: "Willful misconduct." See § 3.1(n). Pension. See § 3.3. Line of duty and misconduct. See § 3.301. Service connection for mental unsoundness in suicide. See § 3.302.

[26 FR 1583, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 38 FR 21923, Aug. 14, 1973; 61 FR 20438, May 7, 1996]

§ 3.324 Multiple noncompensable service-connected disabilities.

Whenever a veteran is suffering from two or more separate permanent service-connected disabilities of such character as clearly to interfere with normal employability, even though none of the disabilities may be of compensable degree under the 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities the rating agency is authorized to apply a 10-percent rating, but not in combination with any other rating.

[40 FR 56435, Dec. 3, 1975]

§ 3.325 [Reserved]

§ 3.326 Examinations.

For purposes of this section, the term examination includes periods of hospital observation when required by VA.

(a) Where there is a claim for disability compensation or pension but medical evidence accompanying the claim is not adequate for rating purposes, a Department of Veterans Affairs examination will be authorized. This paragraph applies to original and supplemental claims as well as claims for increase submitted by a veteran, surviving spouse, parent, or child. Individuals for whom an examination has been scheduled are required to report for the examination.

(b) Provided that it is otherwise adequate for rating purposes, any hospital report, or any examination report, from any government or private institution may be accepted for rating a claim without further examination. However, monetary benefits to a former prisoner of war will not be denied unless the claimant has been offered a complete physical examination conducted at a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or outpatient clinic.

(c) Provided that it is otherwise adequate for rating purposes, a statement from a private physician may be accepted for rating a claim without further examination.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5107(a))

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to report for VA examination. See § 3.655.

[60 FR 52864, Oct. 11, 1995, as amended at 66 FR 45632, Aug. 29, 2001; 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.327 Reexaminations.

(a) *General*. Reexaminations, including periods of hospital observation, will be requested whenever VA determines there is a need to verify either the continued existence or the current severity of a disability. Generally, reexaminations will be required if it is likely that a disability has improved, or if evidence indicates there has been a material change in a disability or that the current rating may be incorrect. Individuals for whom reexaminations have been authorized and scheduled are required to report for such reexaminations. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section provide general guidelines for requesting reexaminations, but shall not be construed as limiting VA's authority to request reexaminations, or periods of hospital observation, at any time in order to ensure that a disability is accurately rated.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(b) *Compensation cases*—(1) *Scheduling reexaminations*. Assignment of a prestabilization rating requires reexamination within the second 6 months period following separation from service. Following initial Department of Veterans Affairs examination, or any scheduled future or other examination, reexamination, if in order, will be

scheduled within not less than 2 years nor more than 5 years within the judgment of the rating board, unless another time period is elsewhere specified.

(2) No periodic future examinations will be requested. In service-connected cases, no periodic reexamination will be scheduled: (i) When the disability is established as static;

(ii) When the findings and symptoms are shown by examinations scheduled in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section or other examinations and hospital reports to have persisted without material improvement for a period of 5 years or more;

(iii) Where the disability from disease is permanent in character and of such nature that there is no likelihood of improvement;

(iv) In cases of veterans over 55 years of age, except under unusual circumstances;

(v) When the rating is a prescribed scheduled minimum rating; or

(vi) Where a combined disability evaluation would not be affected if the future examination should result in reduced evaluation for one or more conditions.

(c) *Pension cases.* In nonservice-connected cases in which the permanent total disability has been confirmed by reexamination or by the history of the case, or with obviously static disabilities, further reexaminations will not generally be requested. In other cases further examination will not be requested routinely and will be accomplished only if considered necessary based upon the particular facts of the individual case. In the cases of veterans over 55 years of age, reexamination will be requested only under unusual circumstances.

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to report for VA examination. See § 3.655.

[26 FR 1585, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 30 FR 11855, Sept. 16, 1965; 36 FR 14467, Aug. 6, 1971; 55 FR 49521, Nov. 29, 1990; 60 FR 27409, May 24, 1995]

§ 3.328 Independent medical opinions.

(a) *General.* When warranted by the medical complexity or controversy involved in a pending claim, an advisory medical opinion may be obtained from one or more medical experts who are

not employees of VA. Opinions shall be obtained from recognized medical schools, universities, clinics or medical institutions with which arrangements for such opinions have been made, and an appropriate official of the institution shall select the individual expert(s) to render an opinion.

(b) *Requests.* A request for an independent medical opinion in conjunction with a claim pending before VA may be initiated by the office having jurisdiction over the claim, by the claimant, or by his or her duly appointed representative. The request must be submitted in writing and must set forth in detail the reasons why the opinion is necessary. All such requests shall be submitted through the Veterans Service Center Manager or Pension Management Center Manager of the office having jurisdiction over the claim, and those requests which in the judgment of the Veterans Service Center Manager or Pension Management Center Manager merit consideration shall be referred to the Compensation Service or the Pension and Fiduciary Service for approval.

(c) *Approval.* (1) Requests for independent medical opinions shall be approved when one of the following conditions is met:

(i) The director of each Service from which a benefit is sought, or his or her designee, determines that the issue under consideration poses a medical problem of such complexity or controversy as to justify solicitation of an independent medical opinion; or

(ii) The independent medical opinion is required to fulfill the instructions contained in a remand order from the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(2) A determination that an independent medical opinion is not warranted may be contested only as part of an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals on the merits of the decision rendered on the primary issue by VA.

(d) *Notification.* The Compensation Service or the Pension and Fiduciary Service shall notify the claimant when the request for an independent medical opinion has been approved with regard to his or her claim and shall furnish the claimant with a copy of the opinion when it is received. If, in the judgment

of the Secretary, disclosure of the independent medical opinion would be harmful to the physical or mental health of the claimant, disclosure shall be subject to the special procedures set forth in § 1.577 of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5109, 5701(b)(1); 5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(3))

[55 FR 18602, May 3, 1990, as amended at 79 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014; 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.329 [Reserved]

§ 3.330 Resumption of rating when veteran subsequently reports for Department of Veterans Affairs examination.

Such ratings will be governed by the provisions of § 3.158, "Abandoned Claims," and § 3.655, "Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination." The period following the termination or reduction for which benefits are precluded by the cited regulations will be stated in the rating. If the evidence is insufficient to evaluate disability during any period following the termination or reduction for which payments are not otherwise precluded, the rating will contain a notation reading "Evidence insufficient to evaluate from _____ to _____."

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination. See § 3.655.

[29 FR 3623, Mar. 21, 1964]

§§ 3.331–3.339 [Reserved]

§ 3.340 Total and permanent total ratings and unemployability.

(a) *Total disability ratings*—(1) *General*. Total disability will be considered to exist when there is present any impairment of mind or body which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation. Total disability may or may not be permanent. Total ratings will not be assigned, generally, for temporary exacerbations or acute infectious diseases except where specifically prescribed by the schedule.

(2) *Schedule for rating disabilities*. Total ratings are authorized for any disability or combination of disabilities for which the Schedule for Rating Disabilities prescribes a 100 percent evaluation or, with less disability,

where the requirements of paragraph 16, page 5 of the rating schedule are present or where, in pension cases, the requirements of paragraph 17, page 5 of the schedule are met.

(3) *Ratings of total disability on history*. In the case of disabilities which have undergone some recent improvement, a rating of total disability may be made, provided:

(i) That the disability must in the past have been of sufficient severity to warrant a total disability rating;

(ii) That it must have required extended, continuous, or intermittent hospitalization, or have produced total industrial incapacity for at least 1 year, or be subject to recurring, severe, frequent, or prolonged exacerbations; and

(iii) That it must be the opinion of the rating agency that despite the recent improvement of the physical condition, the veteran will be unable to effect an adjustment into a substantially gainful occupation. Due consideration will be given to the frequency and duration of totally incapacitating exacerbations since incurrence of the original disease or injury, and to periods of hospitalization for treatment in determining whether the average person could have reestablished himself or herself in a substantially gainful occupation.

(b) *Permanent total disability*. Permanence of total disability will be taken to exist when such impairment is reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the disabled person. The permanent loss or loss of use of both hands, or of both feet, or of one hand and one foot, or of the sight of both eyes, or becoming permanently helpless or bedridden constitutes permanent total disability. Diseases and injuries of long standing which are actually totally incapacitating will be regarded as permanently and totally disabling when the probability of permanent improvement under treatment is remote. Permanent total disability ratings may not be granted as a result of any incapacity from acute infectious disease, accident, or injury, unless there is present one of the recognized combinations or permanent loss of use of extremities or sight, or the person is

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in the strict sense permanently helpless or bedridden, or when it is reasonably certain that a subsidence of the acute or temporary symptoms will be followed by irreducible totality of disability by way of residuals. The age of the disabled person may be considered in determining permanence.

(c) *Insurance ratings.* A rating of permanent and total disability for insurance purposes will have no effect on ratings for compensation or pension.

[26 FR 1585, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981]

§ 3.341 Total disability ratings for compensation purposes.

(a) *General.* Subject to the limitation in paragraph (b) of this section, total-disability compensation ratings may be assigned under the provisions of § 3.340. However, if the total rating is based on a disability or combination of disabilities for which the Schedule for Rating Disabilities provides an evaluation of less than 100 percent, it must be determined that the service-connected disabilities are sufficient to produce unemployability without regard to advancing age.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(b) *Incarcerated veterans.* A total rating for compensation purposes based on individual unemployability which would first become effective while a veteran is incarcerated in a Federal, State or local penal institution for conviction of a felony, shall not be assigned during such period of incarceration. However, where a rating for individual unemployability exists prior to incarceration for a felony and routine review is required, the case will be reconsidered to determine if continued eligibility for such rating exists.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5313(c))

(c) *Program for vocational rehabilitation.* Each time a veteran is rated totally disabled on the basis of individual unemployability during the period beginning after January 31, 1985, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service will be notified so that an evaluation may be offered to determine whether the achievement of a voca-

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tional goal by the veteran is reasonably feasible.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1163)

[46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981, as amended at 50 FR 52774, Dec. 26, 1985; 55 FR 17271, Apr. 24, 1990; 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.342 Permanent and total disability ratings for pension purposes.

(a) *General.* Permanent total disability ratings for pension purposes are authorized for disabling conditions not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct whether or not they are service connected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a))

(b) *Criteria.* In addition to the criteria for determining total disability and permanency of total disability contained in § 3.340, the following special considerations apply in pension cases:

(1) Permanent total disability pension ratings will be authorized for congenital, developmental, hereditary or familial conditions, provided the other requirements for entitlement are met.

(2) The permanence of total disability will be established as of the earliest date consistent with the evidence in the case. Active pulmonary tuberculosis not otherwise established as permanently and totally disabling will be presumed so after 6 months' hospitalization without improvement. The same principle may be applied with other types of disabilities requiring hospitalization for indefinite periods. The need for hospitalization for periods shorter or longer than 6 months may be a proper basis for determining permanence. Where, in application of this principle, it is necessary to employ a waiting period to determine permanence of totality of disability and a report received at the end of such period shows the veteran's condition is unimproved, permanence may be established as of the date of entrance into the hospital. Similarly, when active pulmonary tuberculosis is improved after 6 months' hospitalization but still diagnosed as active after 12 months' hospitalization permanence will also be established as of the date of entrance into the hospital. In other cases the

rating will be effective the date the evidence establishes permanence.

(3) Special consideration must be given the question of permanence in the case of veterans under 40 years of age. For such veterans, permanence of total disability requires a finding that the end result of treatment and adjustment to residual handicaps (rehabilitation) will be permanent disability of the required degree precluding more than marginal employment. Severe diseases and injuries, including multiple fractures or the amputation of a single extremity, should not be taken to establish permanent and total disability until it is shown that the veteran after treatment and convalescence, has been unable to secure or follow employment because of the disability and through no fault of the veteran.

(4) The following shall not be considered as evidence of employability:

(i) Employment as a member-employer or similar employment obtained only in competition with disabled persons.

(ii) Participation in, or the receipt of a distribution of funds as a result of participation in, a therapeutic or rehabilitation activity under 38 U.S.C. 1718.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1718(f))

(5) The authority granted the Secretary under 38 U.S.C. 1502(a)(2) to classify as permanent and total those diseases and disorders, the nature and extent of which, in the Secretary judgment, will justify such determination, will be exercised under § 3.321(b).

(c) *Temporary program of vocational rehabilitation training for certain pension recipients.* (1) When a veteran under age 45 is awarded disability pension during the period beginning on February 1, 1985, and ending on December 31, 1995, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division will be notified so that an evaluation may be made, as provided in § 21.6050, to determine that veteran's potential for rehabilitation.

(2) If a veteran secures employment within the scope of a vocational goal identified in his or her individualized written vocational rehabilitation plan, or in a related field which requires reasonably developed skills and the use of some or all of the training or services furnished the veteran under such plan,

not later than one year after eligibility to counseling under § 21.6040(b)(1) of this chapter expires, the veteran's permanent and total evaluation for pension purposes shall not be terminated by reason of the veteran's capacity to engage in such employment until the veteran has maintained that employment for a period of not less than 12 consecutive months.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1524(c))

[26 FR 1586, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 26 FR 9674, Oct. 13, 1961; 29 FR 3624, Mar. 21, 1964; 39 FR 14944, Apr. 18, 1974; 46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981; 50 FR 52775, Dec. 26, 1985; 53 FR 23235, June 21, 1988; 55 FR 17271, Apr. 24, 1990; 56 FR 25044, June 3, 1991; 56 FR 65851, Dec. 19, 1991; 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993]

§ 3.343 Continuation of total disability ratings.

(a) *General.* Total disability ratings, when warranted by the severity of the condition and not granted purely because of hospital, surgical, or home treatment, or individual unemployability will not be reduced, in the absence of clear error, without examination showing material improvement in physical or mental condition. Examination reports showing material improvement must be evaluated in conjunction with all the facts of record, and consideration must be given particularly to whether the veteran attained improvement under the ordinary conditions of life, *i.e.*, while working or actively seeking work or whether the symptoms have been brought under control by prolonged rest, or generally, by following a regimen which precludes work, and, if the latter, reduction from total disability ratings will not be considered pending reexamination after a period of employment (3 to 6 months).

(b) *Tuberculosis; compensation.* In service-connected cases, evaluations for active or inactive tuberculosis will be governed by the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (part 4 of this chapter). Where in the opinion of the rating board the veteran at the expiration of the period during which a total rating is provided will not be able to maintain inactivity of the disease process under the ordinary conditions of life, the case will be submitted under § 3.321.

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(c) *Individual unemployability.* (1) In reducing a rating of 100 percent service-connected disability based on individual unemployability, the provisions of § 3.105(e) are for application but caution must be exercised in such a determination that actual employability is established by clear and convincing evidence. When in such a case the veteran is undergoing vocational rehabilitation, education or training, the rating will not be reduced by reason thereof unless there is received evidence of marked improvement or recovery in physical or mental conditions or of employment progress, income earned, and prospects of economic rehabilitation, which demonstrates affirmatively the veteran's capacity to pursue the vocation or occupation for which the training is intended to qualify him or her, or unless the physical or mental demands of the course are obviously incompatible with total disability. Neither participation in, nor the receipt of remuneration as a result of participation in, a therapeutic or rehabilitation activity under 38 U.S.C. 1718 shall be considered evidence of employability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1718(f))

(2) If a veteran with a total disability rating for compensation purposes based on individual unemployability begins to engage in a substantially gainful occupation during the period beginning after January 1, 1985, the veteran's rating may not be reduced solely on the basis of having secured and followed such substantially gainful occupation unless the veteran maintains the occupation for a period of 12 consecutive months. For purposes of this subparagraph, temporary interruptions in employment which are of short duration shall not be considered breaks in otherwise continuous employment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1163(a))

CROSS REFERENCE: Protection, total disability. See § 3.951(b).

[33 FR 16273, Nov. 6, 1968, as amended at 39 FR 14944, Apr. 29, 1974; 50 FR 52775, Dec. 26, 1985; 53 FR 23236, June 21, 1988; 55 FR 17271, Apr. 24, 1990; 57 FR 10426, Mar. 26, 1992; 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993; 58 FR 46865, Sept. 3, 1993]

§ 3.344 Stabilization of disability evaluations.

(a) *Examination reports indicating improvement.* Rating agencies will handle cases affected by change of medical findings or diagnosis, so as to produce the greatest degree of stability of disability evaluations consistent with the laws and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations governing disability compensation and pension. It is essential that the entire record of examinations and the medical-industrial history be reviewed to ascertain whether the recent examination is full and complete, including all special examinations indicated as a result of general examination and the entire case history. This applies to treatment of intercurrent diseases and exacerbations, including hospital reports, bedside examinations, examinations by designated physicians, and examinations in the absence of, or without taking full advantage of, laboratory facilities and the cooperation of specialists in related lines. Examinations less full and complete than those on which payments were authorized or continued will not be used as a basis of reduction. Ratings on account of diseases subject to temporary or episodic improvement, e.g., manic depressive or other psychotic reaction, epilepsy, psychoneurotic reaction, arteriosclerotic heart disease, bronchial asthma, gastric or duodenal ulcer, many skin diseases, etc., will not be reduced on any one examination, except in those instances where all the evidence of record clearly warrants the conclusion that sustained improvement has been demonstrated. Ratings on account of diseases which become comparatively symptom free (findings absent) after prolonged rest, e.g. residuals of phlebitis, arteriosclerotic heart disease, etc., will not be reduced on examinations reflecting the results of bed rest. Moreover, though material improvement in the physical or mental condition is clearly reflected the rating agency will consider whether the evidence makes it reasonably certain that the improvement will be maintained under the ordinary conditions of life. When syphilis of the central nervous system or alcoholic deterioration is diagnosed following a long prior history

of psychosis, psychoneurosis, epilepsy, or the like, it is rarely possible to exclude persistence, in masked form, of the preceding innocently acquired manifestations. Rating boards encountering a change of diagnosis will exercise caution in the determination as to whether a change in diagnosis represents no more than a progression of an earlier diagnosis, an error in prior diagnosis or possibly a disease entity independent of the service-connected disability. When the new diagnosis reflects mental deficiency or personality disorder only, the possibility of only temporary remission of a super-imposed psychiatric disease will be borne in mind.

(b) *Doubtful cases.* If doubt remains, after according due consideration to all the evidence developed by the several items discussed in paragraph (a) of this section, the rating agency will continue the rating in effect, citing the former diagnosis with the new diagnosis in parentheses, and following the appropriate code there will be added the reference "Rating continued pending reexamination _____ months from this date, §3.344." The rating agency will determine on the basis of the facts in each individual case whether 18, 24 or 30 months will be allowed to elapse before the reexamination will be made.

(c) *Disabilities which are likely to improve.* The provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section apply to ratings which have continued for long periods at the same level (5 years or more). They do not apply to disabilities which have not become stabilized and are likely to improve. Reexaminations disclosing improvement, physical or mental, in these disabilities will warrant reduction in rating.

[26 FR 1586, Feb. 24, 1961; 58 FR 53660, Oct. 18, 1993]

RATINGS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

§ 3.350 Special monthly compensation ratings.

The rates of special monthly compensation stated in this section are those provided under 38 U.S.C. 1114.

(a) *Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k).* Special monthly compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) is payable for each anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand,

one foot, both buttocks, one or more creative organs, blindness of one eye having only light perception, deafness of both ears, having absence of air and bone conduction, complete organic aphonia with constant inability to communicate by speech or, in the case of a woman veteran, loss of 25% or more of tissue from a single breast or both breasts in combination (including loss by mastectomy or partial mastectomy), or following receipt of radiation treatment of breast tissue. This special compensation is payable in addition to the basic rate of compensation otherwise payable on the basis of degree of disability, provided that the combined rate of compensation does not exceed the monthly rate set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) when authorized in conjunction with any of the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1114 (a) through (j) or (s). When there is entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) or an intermediate rate under (p) such additional allowance is payable for each such anatomical loss or loss of use existing in addition to the requirements for the basic rates, provided the total does not exceed the monthly rate set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1114(o). The limitations on the maximum compensation payable under this paragraph are independent of and do not preclude payment of additional compensation for dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1115, or the special allowance for aid and attendance provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r).

(1) *Creative organ.* (i) Loss of a creative organ will be shown by acquired absence of one or both testicles (other than undescended testicles) or ovaries or other creative organ. Loss of use of one testicle will be established when examination by a board finds that:

(a) The diameters of the affected testicle are reduced to one-third of the corresponding diameters of the paired normal testicle, or

(b) The diameters of the affected testicle are reduced to one-half or less of the corresponding normal testicle and there is alteration of consistency so that the affected testicle is considerably harder or softer than the corresponding normal testicle; or

(c) If neither of the conditions (a) or (b) is met, when a biopsy, recommended by a board including a

genitourologist and accepted by the veteran, establishes the absence of spermatozoa.

(ii) When loss or loss of use of a creative organ resulted from wounds or other trauma sustained in service, or resulted from operations in service for the relief of other conditions, the creative organ becoming incidentally involved, the benefit may be granted.

(iii) Loss or loss of use traceable to an elective operation performed subsequent to service, will not establish entitlement to the benefit. If, however, the operation after discharge was required for the correction of a specific injury caused by a preceding operation in service, it will support authorization of the benefit. When the existence of disability is established meeting the above requirements for nonfunctioning testicle due to operation after service, resulting in loss of use, the benefit may be granted even though the operation is one of election. An operation is not considered to be one of election where it is advised on sound medical judgment for the relief of a pathological condition or to prevent possible future pathological consequences.

(iv) Atrophy resulting from mumps followed by orchitis in service is service connected. Since atrophy is usually perceptible within 1 to 6 months after infection subsides, an examination more than 6 months after the subsidence of orchitis demonstrating a normal genitourinary system will be considered in determining rebuttal of service incurrence of atrophy later demonstrated. Mumps not followed by orchitis in service will not suffice as the antecedent cause of subsequent atrophy for the purpose of authorizing the benefit.

(2) *Foot and hand.* (i) Loss of use of a hand or a foot will be held to exist when no effective function remains other than that which would be equally well served by an amputation stump at the site of election below elbow or knee with use of a suitable prosthetic appliance. The determination will be made on the basis of the actual remaining function, whether the acts of grasping, manipulation, etc., in the case of the hand, or of balance, propulsion, etc., in the case of the foot, could be accom-

plished equally well by an amputation stump with prosthesis; for example:

(a) Extremely unfavorable complete ankylosis of the knee, or complete ankylosis of two major joints of an extremity, or shortening of the lower extremity of 3½ inches or more, will constitute loss of use of the hand or foot involved.

(b) Complete paralysis of the external popliteal nerve (common peroneal) and consequent footdrop, accompanied by characteristic organic changes including trophic and circulatory disturbances and other concomitants confirmatory of complete paralysis of this nerve, will be taken as loss of use of the foot.

(3) *Both buttocks.* (i) Loss of use of both buttocks shall be deemed to exist when there is severe damage by disease or injury to muscle group XVII, bilateral, (diagnostic code 5317) and additional disability making it impossible for the disabled person, without assistance, to rise from a seated position and from a stooped position (fingers to toes position) and to maintain postural stability (the pelvis upon head of femur). The assistance may be done by the person's own hands or arms, and, in the matter of postural stability, by a special appliance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(k))

(ii) Special monthly compensation for loss or loss of use of both lower extremities (38 U.S.C. 1114(l) through (n)) will not preclude additional compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) for loss of use of both buttocks where appropriate tests clearly substantiate that there is such additional loss.

(4) *Eye.* Loss of use or blindness of one eye, having only light perception, will be held to exist when there is inability to recognize test letters at 1 foot and when further examination of the eye reveals that perception of objects, hand movements, or counting fingers cannot be accomplished at 3 feet. Lesser extents of vision, particularly perception of objects, hand movements, or counting fingers at distances less than 3 feet is considered of negligible utility.

(5) *Deafness*. Deafness of both ears, having absence of air and bone conduction will be held to exist where examination in a Department of Veterans Affairs authorized audiology clinic under current testing criteria shows bilateral hearing loss is equal to or greater than the minimum bilateral hearing loss required for a maximum rating evaluation under the rating schedule.

(Authority: Pub. L. 88-20)

(6) *Aphonia*. Complete organic aphonia will be held to exist where there is a disability of the organs of speech which constantly precludes communication by speech.

(Authority: Pub. L. 88-22)

(b) *Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(l)*. The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) is payable for anatomical loss or loss of use of both feet, one hand and one foot, blindness in both eyes with visual acuity of 5/200 or less or being permanently bedridden or so helpless as to be in need of regular aid and attendance.

(1) *Extremities*. The criteria for loss and loss of use of an extremity contained in paragraph (a)(2) of this section are applicable.

(2) *Eyes, bilateral*. 5/200 visual acuity or less bilaterally qualifies for entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114(l). However, evaluation of 5/200 based on acuity in excess of that degree but less than 10/200 (§4.83 of this chapter), does not qualify. Concentric contraction of the field of vision beyond 5 degrees in both eyes is the equivalent of 5/200 visual acuity.

(3) *Need for aid and attendance*. The criteria for determining that a veteran is so helpless as to be in need of regular aid and attendance are contained in §3.352(a).

(4) *Permanently bedridden*. The criteria for rating are contained in §3.352(a). Where possible, determinations should be on the basis of permanently bedridden rather than for need of aid and attendance (except where 38 U.S.C. 1114(r) is involved) to avoid reduction during hospitalization where aid and attendance is provided in kind.

(c) *Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m)*. (1) The special monthly compensation pro-

vided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) is payable for any of the following conditions:

(i) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands;

(ii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both legs at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place;

(iii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place;

(iv) Blindness in both eyes having only light perception;

(v) Blindness in both eyes leaving the veteran so helpless as to be in need of regular aid and attendance.

(2) *Natural elbow or knee action*. In determining whether there is natural elbow or knee action with prosthesis in place, consideration will be based on whether use of the proper prosthetic appliance requires natural use of the joint, or whether necessary motion is otherwise controlled, so that the muscles affecting joint motion, if not already atrophied, will become so. If there is no movement in the joint, as in ankylosis or complete paralysis, use of prosthesis is not to be expected, and the determination will be as though there were one in place.

(3) *Eyes, bilateral*. With visual acuity 5/200 or less or the vision field reduced to 5 degree concentric contraction in both eyes, entitlement on account of need for regular aid and attendance will be determined on the facts in the individual case.

(d) *Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(n)*. The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(n) is payable for any of the conditions which follow: Amputation is a prerequisite except for loss of use of both arms and blindness without light perception in both eyes. If a prosthesis cannot be worn at the present level of amputation but could be applied if there were a reamputation at a higher level, the requirements of this paragraph are not met; instead, consideration will be given to loss of natural elbow or knee action.

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(1) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both arms at a level or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place;

(2) Anatomical loss of both legs so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance;

(3) Anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance;

(4) Anatomical loss of both eyes or blindness without light perception in both eyes.

(e) *Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (o).* (1) The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) is payable for any of the following conditions:

(i) Anatomical loss of both arms so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance;

(ii) Conditions entitling to two or more of the rates (no condition being considered twice) provided in 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) through (n);

(iii) Bilateral deafness rated at 60 percent or more disabling (and the hearing impairment in either one or both ears is service connected) in combination with service-connected blindness with bilateral visual acuity 20/200 or less.

(iv) Service-connected total deafness in one ear or bilateral deafness rated at 40 percent or more disabling (and the hearing impairment in either one of both ears is service-connected) in combination with service-connected blindness of both eyes having only light perception or less.

(2) *Paraplegia.* Paralysis of both lower extremities together with loss of anal and bladder sphincter control will entitle to the maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o), through the combination of loss of use of both legs and helplessness. The requirement of loss of anal and bladder sphincter control is met even though incontinence has been overcome under a strict regimen of rehabilitation of bowel and bladder training and other auxiliary measures.

(3) *Combinations.* Determinations must be based upon separate and distinct disabilities. This requires, for example, that where a veteran who had suffered the loss or loss of use of two extremities is being considered for the

maximum rate on account of helplessness requiring regular aid and attendance, the latter must be based on need resulting from pathology other than that of the extremities. If the loss or loss of use of two extremities or being permanently bedridden leaves the person helpless, increase is not in order on account of this helplessness. Under no circumstances will the combination of “being permanently bedridden” and “being so helpless as to require regular aid and attendance” without separate and distinct anatomical loss, or loss of use, of two extremities, or blindness, be taken as entitling to the maximum benefit. The fact, however, that two separate and distinct entitling disabilities, such as anatomical loss, or loss of use of both hands and both feet, result from a common etiological agent, for example, one injury or rheumatoid arthritis, will not preclude maximum entitlement.

(4) *Helplessness.* The maximum rate, as a result of including helplessness as one of the entitling multiple disabilities, is intended to cover, in addition to obvious losses and blindness, conditions such as the loss of use of two extremities with absolute deafness and nearly total blindness or with severe multiple injuries producing total disability outside the useless extremities, these conditions being construed as loss of use of two extremities and helplessness.

(f) *Intermediate or next higher rate.* An intermediate rate authorized by this paragraph shall be established at the arithmetic mean, rounded to the nearest dollar, between the two rates concerned.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114 (p))

(1) *Extremities.* (i) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) and (m).

(ii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(iii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss or loss of

use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) and (m).

(iv) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(v) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) and (n).

(vi) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) and (m).

(vii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(viii) Anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(ix) Anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(x) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(xi) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand with anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(n).

(xii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (n) and (o).

(2) Eyes, bilateral, and blindness in connection with deafness and/or loss or loss of use of a hand or foot.

(i) Blindness of one eye with 5/200 visual acuity or less and blindness of the other eye having only light perception will entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) and (m).

(ii) Blindness of one eye with 5/200 visual acuity or less and anatomical loss of, or blindness having no light perception in the other eye, will entitle to a rate equal to 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(iii) Blindness of one eye having only light perception and anatomical loss of, or blindness having no light perception in the other eye, will entitle to a rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(iv) Blindness in both eyes with visual acuity of 5/200 or less, or blindness in both eyes rated under subparagraph (2) (i) or (ii) of this paragraph, when accompanied by service-connected total deafness in one ear, will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate of if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(v) Blindness in both eyes having only light perception or less, or rated under subparagraph (2)(iii) of this paragraph, when accompanied by bilateral deafness (and the hearing impairment in either one or both ears is service-connected) rated at 10 or 20 percent disabling, will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate, or if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(Authority: Sec. 112, Pub. L. 98-223)

(vi) Blindness in both eyes rated under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l), (m) or (n), or rated under subparagraphs (2)(i), (ii) or (iii) of this paragraph, when accompanied by bilateral deafness rated at no less than 30 percent, and the hearing

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impairment in one or both ears is service-connected, will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, or if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(p))

(vii) Blindness in both eyes rated under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l), (m), or (n), or under the intermediate or next higher rate provisions of this subparagraph, when accompanied by:

(A) Service-connected loss or loss of use of one hand, will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 or, if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o); or

(B) Service-connected loss or loss of use of one foot which by itself or in combination with another compensable disability would be ratable at 50 percent or more, will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 or, if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o); or

(C) Service-connected loss or loss of use of one foot which is ratable at less than 50 percent and which is the only compensable disability other than bilateral blindness, will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate or, if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(p))

(3) *Additional independent 50 percent disabilities.* In addition to the statutory rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) and the intermediate or next higher rate provisions outlined above, additional single permanent disability or combinations of permanent disabilities independently ratable at 50 percent or more will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate or if already entitled to an intermediate rate to the next higher statutory rate

under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but not above the (o) rate. In the application of this subparagraph the disability or disabilities independently ratable at 50 percent or more must be separate and distinct and involve different anatomical segments or bodily systems from the conditions establishing entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) or the intermediate rate provisions outlined above. The graduated ratings for arrested tuberculosis will not be utilized in this connection, but the permanent residuals of tuberculosis may be utilized.

(4) *Additional independent 100 percent ratings.* In addition to the statutory rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) and the intermediate or next higher rate provisions outlined above additional single permanent disability independently ratable at 100 percent apart from any consideration of individual unemployability will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 or if already entitled to an intermediate rate to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o). In the application of this subparagraph the single permanent disability independently ratable at 100 percent must be separate and distinct and involve different anatomical segments or bodily systems from the conditions establishing entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) or the intermediate rate provisions outlined above.

(i) Where the multiple loss or loss of use entitlement to a statutory or intermediate rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) and (o) is caused by the same etiological disease or injury, that disease or injury may not serve as the basis for the independent 50 percent or 100 percent unless it is so rated without regard to the loss or loss of use.

(ii) The graduated ratings for arrested tuberculosis will not be utilized in this connection, but the permanent residuals of tuberculosis may be utilized.

(5) *Three extremities.* Anatomical loss or loss of use, or a combination of anatomical loss and loss of use, of three extremities shall entitle a veteran to the next higher rate without regard to whether that rate is a statutory rate or an intermediate rate. The maximum

monthly payment under this provision may not exceed the amount stated in 38 U.S.C. 1114(p).

(g) *Inactive tuberculosis (complete arrest)*. The rating criteria for determining inactivity of tuberculosis are set out in § 3.375.

(1) For a veteran who was receiving or entitled to receive compensation for tuberculosis on August 19, 1968, the minimum monthly rate is \$67. This minimum special monthly compensation is not to be combined with or added to any other disability compensation.

(2) For a veteran who was not receiving or entitled to receive compensation for tuberculosis on August 19, 1968, the special monthly compensation authorized by paragraph (g)(1) of this section is not payable.

(h) *Special aid and attendance benefit; 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)*—(1) Maximum compensation cases. A veteran receiving the maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (o) or (p) who is in need of regular aid and attendance or a higher level of care is entitled to an additional allowance during periods he or she is not hospitalized at United States Government expense. (See § 3.552(b)(2) as to continuance following admission for hospitalization.) Determination of this need is subject to the criteria of § 3.352. The regular or higher level aid and attendance allowance is payable whether or not the need for regular aid and attendance or a higher level of care was a partial basis for entitlement to the maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (o) or (p), or was based on an independent factual determination.

(2) *Entitlement to compensation at the intermediate rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (n) and (o) plus special monthly compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k)*. A veteran receiving compensation at the intermediate rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (n) and (o) plus special monthly compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) who establishes a factual need for regular aid and attendance or a higher level of care, is also entitled to an additional allowance during periods he or she is not hospitalized at United States Government expense. (See § 3.552(b)(2) as to continuance following admission for hospitalization.) Determination of the

factual need for aid and attendance is subject to the criteria of § 3.352:

(3) *Amount of the allowance*. The amount of the additional allowance payable to a veteran in need of regular aid and attendance is specified in 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(1). The amount of the additional allowance payable to a veteran in need of a higher level of care is specified in 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(2). The higher level aid and attendance allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(2) is payable in lieu of the regular aid and attendance allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(1).

(i) *Total plus 60 percent, or housebound; 38 U.S.C. 1114(s)*. The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(s) is payable where the veteran has a single service-connected disability rated as 100 percent and,

(1) Has additional service-connected disability or disabilities independently ratable at 60 percent, separate and distinct from the 100 percent service-connected disability and involving different anatomical segments or bodily systems, or

(2) Is permanently housebound by reason of service-connected disability or disabilities. This requirement is met when the veteran is substantially confined as a direct result of service-connected disabilities to his or her dwelling and the immediate premises or, if institutionalized, to the ward or clinical areas, and it is reasonably certain that the disability or disabilities and resultant confinement will continue throughout his or her lifetime.

(j) *Special aid and attendance benefit for residuals of traumatic brain injury (38 U.S.C. 1114(t))*. The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(t) is payable to a veteran who, as the result of service-connected disability, is in need of regular aid and attendance for the residuals of traumatic brain injury, is not eligible for compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(2), and in the absence of such regular aid and attendance would require hospitalization, nursing home care, or other residential institutional care. Determination of this need is subject to the criteria of § 3.352.

(1) A veteran described in this paragraph (j) shall be entitled to the

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amount equal to the compensation authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) or the maximum rate authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(p) and, in addition to such compensation, a monthly allowance equal to the rate described in 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(2) during periods he or she is not hospitalized at United States Government expense. (See § 3.552(b)(2) as to continuance following admission for hospitalization.)

(2) An allowance authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(t) shall be paid in lieu of any allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(1).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 38 U.S.C. 1114(t))

[26 FR 1587, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 4739, May 18, 1962; 28 FR 1587, Feb. 20, 1963; 28 FR 5671, June 11, 1963; 40 FR 54245, Nov. 21, 1975; 45 FR 25392, Apr. 15, 1980; 46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981; 48 FR 41161, Sept. 14, 1983; 49 FR 47003, Nov. 30, 1984; 54 FR 34981, Aug. 23, 1989; 60 FR 12886, Mar. 9, 1995; 67 FR 6873, Feb. 14, 2002; 68 FR 55467, Sept. 26, 2003; 74 FR 11483, Mar. 18, 2009; 83 FR 20736, May 8, 2018]

§ 3.351 Special monthly dependency and indemnity compensation, death compensation, pension and spouse's compensation ratings.

(a) *General.* This section sets forth criteria for determining whether:

(1) Increased pension is payable to a veteran by reason of need for aid and attendance or by reason of being housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(d), (e))

(2) Increased compensation is payable to a veteran by reason of the veteran's spouse being in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1115(1)(E))

(3) Increased dependency and indemnity compensation is payable to a surviving spouse or parent by reason of being in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(c), 1315(h))

(4) Increased dependency and indemnity compensation is payable to a surviving spouse who is not in need of aid and attendance but is housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(d))

(5) Increased pension is payable to a surviving spouse by reason of need for aid and attendance, or if not in need of aid and attendance, by reason of being housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(d), (e))

(6) Increased death compensation is payable to a surviving spouse by reason of being in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1122)

(b) *Aid and attendance; need.* Need for aid and attendance means helplessness or being so nearly helpless as to require the regular aid and attendance of another person. The criteria set forth in paragraph (c) of this section will be applied in determining whether such need exists.

(c) *Aid and attendance; criteria.* The veteran, spouse, surviving spouse or parent will be considered in need of regular aid and attendance if he or she:

(1) Is blind or so nearly blind as to have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less; or

(2) Is a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity; or

(3) Establishes a factual need for aid and attendance under the criteria set forth in § 3.352(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(b))

(d) *Housebound, or permanent and total plus 60 percent; disability pension.* The rate of pension payable to a veteran who is entitled to pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521 and who is not in need of regular aid and attendance shall be as prescribed in 38 U.S.C. 1521(e) if, in addition to having a single permanent disability rated 100 percent disabling under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (not including ratings based upon unemployability under § 4.17 of this chapter) the veteran:

(1) Has additional disability or disabilities independently ratable at 60 percent or more, separate and distinct from the permanent disability rated as 100 percent disabling and involving different anatomical segments or bodily systems, or

(2) Is “permanently housebound” by reason of disability or disabilities. This requirement is met when the veteran is substantially confined to his or her dwelling and the immediate premises or, if institutionalized, to the ward or clinical area, and it is reasonably certain that the disability or disabilities and resultant confinement will continue throughout his or her lifetime.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(c), 1521(e))

(e) *Housebound; dependency and indemnity compensation.* The monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to a surviving spouse who does not qualify for increased dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311(c) based on need for regular aid and attendance shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1311(d) if the surviving spouse is permanently housebound by reason of disability. The “permanently housebound” requirement is met when the surviving spouse is substantially confined to his or her home (ward or clinical areas, if institutionalized) or immediate premises by reason of disability or disabilities which it is reasonably certain will remain throughout the surviving spouse’s lifetime.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(d))

(f) *Housebound; improved pension; death.* The annual rate of death pension payable to a surviving spouse who does not qualify for an annual rate of death pension payable under § 3.23(a)(6) based on need for aid and attendance shall be as set forth in § 3.23(a)(7) if the surviving spouse is permanently housebound by reason of disability. The “permanently housebound” requirement is met when the surviving spouse is substantially confined to his or her home (ward or clinical areas, if institutionalized) or immediate premises by reason of disability or disabilities which it is reasonably certain will remain throughout the surviving spouse’s lifetime.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(e))

[44 FR 45939, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.352 Criteria for determining need for aid and attendance and “permanently bedridden.”

(a) *Basic criteria for regular aid and attendance and permanently bedridden.* The following will be accorded consideration in determining the need for regular aid and attendance (§ 3.351(c)(3): inability of claimant to dress or undress himself (herself), or to keep himself (herself) ordinarily clean and presentable; frequent need of adjustment of any special prosthetic or orthopedic appliances which by reason of the particular disability cannot be done without aid (this will not include the adjustment of appliances which normal persons would be unable to adjust without aid, such as supports, belts, lacing at the back, etc.); inability of claimant to feed himself (herself) through loss of coordination of upper extremities or through extreme weakness; inability to attend to the wants of nature; or incapacity, physical or mental, which requires care or assistance on a regular basis to protect the claimant from hazards or dangers incident to his or her daily environment. “Bedridden” will be a proper basis for the determination. For the purpose of this paragraph “bedridden” will be that condition which, through its essential character, actually requires that the claimant remain in bed. The fact that claimant has voluntarily taken to bed or that a physician has prescribed rest in bed for the greater or lesser part of the day to promote convalescence or cure will not suffice. It is not required that all of the disabling conditions enumerated in this paragraph be found to exist before a favorable rating may be made. The particular personal functions which the veteran is unable to perform should be considered in connection with his or her condition as a whole. It is only necessary that the evidence establish that the veteran is so helpless as to need regular aid and attendance, not that there be a constant need. Determinations that the veteran is so helpless, as to be in need of regular aid and attendance will not be based solely upon an opinion that the claimant’s condition is such as would require him or her to be in bed. They must be based on the actual requirement of personal assistance from others.

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(b) *Basic criteria for the higher level aid and attendance allowance.* (1) A veteran is entitled to the higher level aid and attendance allowance authorized by § 3.350(h) in lieu of the regular aid and attendance allowance when all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The veteran is entitled to the compensation authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o), or the maximum rate of compensation authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(p).

(ii) The veteran meets the requirements for entitlement to the regular aid and attendance allowance in paragraph (a) of this section.

(iii) The veteran needs a “higher level of care” (as defined in paragraph (b)(3) of this section) than is required to establish entitlement to the regular aid and attendance allowance, and in the absence of the provision of such higher level of care the veteran would require hospitalization, nursing home care, or other residential institutional care.

(2) A veteran is entitled to the higher level aid and attendance allowance authorized by § 3.350(j) in lieu of the regular aid and attendance allowance when all of the following conditions are met:

(i) As a result of service-connected residuals of traumatic brain injury, the veteran meets the requirements for entitlement to the regular aid and attendance allowance in paragraph (a) of this section.

(ii) As a result of service-connected residuals of traumatic brain injury, the veteran needs a “higher level of care” (as defined in paragraph (b)(3) of this section) than is required to establish entitlement to the regular aid and attendance allowance, and in the absence of the provision of such higher level of care the veteran would require hospitalization, nursing home care, or other residential institutional care.

(3) Need for a higher level of care shall be considered to be need for personal health-care services provided on a daily basis in the veteran’s home by a person who is licensed to provide such services or who provides such services under the regular supervision of a licensed health-care professional. Personal health-care services include (but are not limited to) such services

as physical therapy, administration of injections, placement of indwelling catheters, and the changing of sterile dressings, or like functions which require professional health-care training or the regular supervision of a trained health-care professional to perform. A licensed health-care professional includes (but is not limited to) a doctor of medicine or osteopathy, a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or a physical therapist licensed to practice by a State or political subdivision thereof.

(4) The term “under the regular supervision of a licensed health-care professional”, as used in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, means that an unlicensed person performing personal health-care services is following a regimen of personal health-care services prescribed by a health-care professional, and that the health-care professional consults with the unlicensed person providing the health-care services at least once each month to monitor the prescribed regimen. The consultation need not be in person; a telephone call will suffice.

(5) A person performing personal health-care services who is a relative or other member of the veteran’s household is not exempted from the requirement that he or she be a licensed health-care professional or be providing such care under the regular supervision of a licensed health-care professional.

(6) The provisions of paragraph (b) of this section are to be strictly construed. The higher level aid-and-attendance allowance is to be granted only when the veteran’s need is clearly established and the amount of services required by the veteran on a daily basis is substantial.

(c) *Attendance by relative.* The performance of the necessary aid and attendance service by a relative of the beneficiary or other member of his or her household will not prevent the granting of the additional allowance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1114(r)(2), 1114(t))

[41 FR 29680, July 19, 1976, as amended at 44 FR 22720, Apr. 17, 1979; 60 FR 27409, May 24, 1995; 83 FR 20737, May 8, 2018]

§ 3.353 Determinations of incompetency and competency.

(a) *Definition of mental incompetency.* A mentally incompetent person is one who because of injury or disease lacks the mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including disbursement of funds without limitation.

(b) *Authority.* (1) Rating agencies have sole authority to make official determinations of competency and incompetency for purposes of: insurance (38 U.S.C. 1922), and, subject to § 13.110 of this chapter, disbursement of benefits. Such determinations are final and binding on field stations for these purposes.

(2) Where the beneficiary is rated incompetent, the Veterans Service Center Manager will develop information as to the beneficiary's social, economic and industrial adjustment; appoint (or recommend appointment of) a fiduciary as provided in § 13.100 of this chapter; select a method of disbursing payment as provided in § 13.100 of this chapter, or in the case of a married beneficiary, appoint the beneficiary's spouse to receive payments as provided in § 13.100 of this chapter; and authorize disbursement of the benefit.

(3) If in the course of fulfilling the responsibilities assigned in paragraph (b)(2) the Veterans Service Center Manager develops evidence indicating that the beneficiary may be capable of administering the funds payable without limitation, he or she will refer that evidence to the rating agency with a statement as to his or her findings. The rating agency will consider this evidence, together with all other evidence of record, to determine whether its prior determination of incompetency should remain in effect. Reexamination may be requested as provided in § 3.327(a) if necessary to properly evaluate the beneficiary's mental capacity to contract or manage his or her own affairs.

(c) *Medical opinion.* Unless the medical evidence is clear, convincing and leaves no doubt as to the person's incompetency, the rating agency will make no determination of incompetency without a definite expression regarding the question by the responsible medical authorities. Consider-

ations of medical opinions will be in accordance with the principles in paragraph (a) of this section. Determinations relative to incompetency should be based upon all evidence of record and there should be a consistent relationship between the percentage of disability, facts relating to commitment or hospitalization and the holding of incompetency.

(d) *Presumption in favor of competency.* Where reasonable doubt arises regarding a beneficiary's mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including the disbursement of funds without limitation, such doubt will be resolved in favor of competency (see § 3.102 on reasonable doubt).

(e) *Due process.* Whenever it is proposed to make an incompetency determination, the beneficiary will be notified of the proposed action and of the right to a hearing as provided in § 3.103. Such notice is not necessary if the beneficiary has been declared incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction or if a guardian has been appointed for the beneficiary based upon a court finding of incompetency. If a hearing is requested it must be held prior to a rating decision of incompetency. Failure or refusal of the beneficiary after proper notice to request or cooperate in such a hearing will not preclude a rating decision based on the evidence of record.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

[36 FR 19020, Sept. 25, 1971, and 40 FR 1241, Jan. 7, 1975, as amended at 42 FR 2069, Jan. 10, 1977; 58 FR 37856, July 14, 1993; 60 FR 55792, Nov. 3, 1995; 66 FR 48560, Sept. 21, 2001; 67 FR 46868, July 17, 2002; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003; 83 FR 32738, July 13, 2018]

§ 3.354 Determinations of insanity.

(a) *Definition of insanity.* An insane person is one who, while not mentally defective or constitutionally psychopathic, except when a psychosis has been engrafted upon such basic condition, exhibits, due to disease, a more or less prolonged deviation from his normal method of behavior; or who interferes with the peace of society; or who has so departed (become antisocial) from the accepted standards of the community to which by birth and education he belongs as to lack the adaptability to make further adjustment to

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the social customs of the community in which he resides.

(b) *Insanity causing discharge.* When a rating agency is concerned with determining whether a veteran was insane at the time he committed an offense leading to his court-martial, discharge or resignation (38 U.S.C. 5303(b)), it will base its decision on all the evidence procurable relating to the period involved, and apply the definition in paragraph (a) of this section.

[26 FR 1589, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.355 Testamentary capacity for insurance purposes.

When cases are referred to a rating agency involving the testamentary capacity of the insured to execute designations or changes of beneficiary, or designations or changes of option, the following considerations will apply:

(a) Testamentary capacity is that degree of mental capacity necessary to enable a person to perform a testamentary act. This, in general, requires that the testator reasonably comprehend the nature and significance of his act, that is, the subject and extent of his disposition, recognition of the object of his bounty, and appreciation of the consequence of his act, uninfluenced by any material delusion as to the property or persons involved.

(b) Due consideration should be given to all facts of record, with emphasis being placed on those facts bearing upon the mental condition of the testator (insured) at the time or nearest the time he executed the designation or change. In this connection, consideration should be given to lay as well as medical evidence.

(c) Lack of testamentary capacity should not be confused with insanity or mental incompetence. An insane person might have a lucid interval during which he would possess testamentary capacity. On the other hand, a sane person might suffer a temporary mental aberration during which he would not possess testamentary capacity. There is a general but rebuttable presumption that every testator possesses testamentary capacity. Therefore, reasonable doubts should be resolved in favor of testamentary capacity.

[26 FR 1590, Feb. 24, 1961]

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§ 3.356 Conditions which determine permanent incapacity for self-support.

(a) *Basic determinations.* A child must be shown to be permanently incapable of self-support by reason of mental or physical defect at the date of attaining the age of 18 years.

(b) *Rating criteria.* Rating determinations will be made solely on the basis of whether the child is permanently incapable of self-support through his own efforts by reason of physical or mental defects. The question of permanent incapacity for self-support is one of fact for determination by the rating agency on competent evidence of record in the individual case. Rating criteria applicable to disabled veterans are not controlling. Principal factors for consideration are:

(1) The fact that a claimant is earning his or her own support is prima facie evidence that he or she is not incapable of self-support. Incapacity for self-support will not be considered to exist when the child by his or her own efforts is provided with sufficient income for his or her reasonable support.

(2) A child shown by proper evidence to have been permanently incapable of self-support prior to the date of attaining the age of 18 years, may be so held at a later date even though there may have been a short intervening period or periods when his or her condition was such that he or she was employed, provided the cause of incapacity is the same as that upon which the original determination was made and there were no intervening diseases or injuries that could be considered as major factors. Employment which was only casual, intermittent, tryout, unsuccessful, or terminated after a short period by reason of disability, should not be considered as rebutting permanent incapability of self-support otherwise established.

(3) It should be borne in mind that employment of a child prior or subsequent to the delimiting age may or may not be a normal situation, depending on the educational progress of the child, the economic situation of the family, indulgent attitude of parents, and the like. In those cases where the extent and nature of disability raises some doubt as to whether they would

render the average person incapable of self-support, factors other than employment are for consideration. In such cases there should be considered whether the daily activities of the child in the home and community are equivalent to the activities of employment of any nature within the physical or mental capacity of the child which would provide sufficient income for reasonable support. Lack of employment of the child either prior to the delimiting age or thereafter should not be considered as a major factor in the determination to be made, unless it is shown that it was due to physical or mental defect and not to mere disinclination to work or indulgence of relatives or friends.

(4) The capacity of a child for self-support is not determinable upon employment afforded solely upon sympathetic or charitable considerations and which involved no actual or substantial rendition of services.

CROSS REFERENCE: Basic pension and eligibility determinations. See § 3.314.

[26 FR 1590, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 38 FR 871, Jan. 5, 1973]

§ 3.357 Civil service preference ratings.

For the purpose of certifying civil service disability preference only, a service-connected disability may be assigned an evaluation of "less than ten percent." Any directly or presumptively service-connected disease or injury which exhibits some extent of actual impairment may be held to exist at the level of less than ten percent. For disabilities incurred in combat, however, no actual impairment is required.

[58 FR 52018, Oct. 6, 1993]

§ 3.358 Compensation for disability or death from hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, examinations or vocational rehabilitation training (§ 3.800).

(a) *General.* This section applies to claims received by VA before October 1, 1997. If it is determined that there is additional disability resulting from a disease or injury or aggravation of an existing disease or injury suffered as a result of hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, examination, or

vocational rehabilitation training, compensation will be payable for such additional disability. For claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997, see § 3.361.

(b) *Additional disability.* In determining that additional disability exists, the following considerations will govern:

(1) The veteran's physical condition immediately prior to the disease or injury on which the claim for compensation is based will be compared with the subsequent physical condition resulting from the disease or injury, each body part involved being considered separately.

(i) As applied to examinations, the physical condition prior to the disease or injury will be the condition at time of beginning the physical examination as a result of which the disease or injury was sustained.

(ii) As applied to medical or surgical treatment, the physical condition prior to the disease or injury will be the condition which the specific medical or surgical treatment was designed to relieve.

(2) Compensation will not be payable under this section for the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which the hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, or examination was furnished, unless VA's failure to exercise reasonable skill and care in the diagnosis or treatment of the disease or injury caused additional disability or death that probably would have been prevented by proper diagnosis or treatment. Compensation will not be payable under this section for the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which vocational rehabilitation training was provided.

(c) *Cause.* In determining whether such additional disability resulted from a disease or an injury or an aggravation of an existing disease or injury suffered as a result of training, hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, or examination, the following considerations will govern:

(1) It will be necessary to show that the additional disability is actually the result of such disease or injury or an aggravation of an existing disease or injury and not merely coincidental therewith.

(2) The mere fact that aggravation occurred will not suffice to make the additional disability compensable in the absence of proof that it resulted from disease or injury or an aggravation of an existing disease or injury suffered as the result of training, hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, or examination.

(3) Compensation is not payable for the necessary consequences of medical or surgical treatment or examination properly administered with the express or implied consent of the veteran, or, in appropriate cases, the veteran's representative. "Necessary consequences" are those which are certain to result from, or were intended to result from, the examination or medical or surgical treatment administered. Consequences otherwise certain or intended to result from a treatment will not be considered uncertain or unintended solely because it had not been determined at the time consent was given whether that treatment would in fact be administered.

(4) When the proximate cause of the injury suffered was the veteran's willful misconduct or failure to follow instructions, it will bar him (or her) from receipt of compensation hereunder except in the case of incompetent veterans.

(5) Compensation for disability resulting from the pursuit of vocational rehabilitation is not payable unless there is established a direct (proximate) causal connection between the injury or aggravation of an existing injury and some essential activity or function which is within the scope of the vocational rehabilitation course, not necessarily limited to activities or functions specifically designated by the Department of Veterans Affairs in the individual case, since ordinarily it is not to be expected that each and every different function and act of a veteran pursuant to his or her course of training will be particularly specified in the outline of the course or training program. For example, a disability resulting from the use of an item of mechanical or other equipment is within the purview of the statute if training in its use is implicit within the prescribed program or course outlined or if its use is implicit in the per-

formance of some task or operation the trainee must learn to perform, although such use may not be especially mentioned in the training program. In determining whether the element of direct or proximate causation is present, it remains necessary for a distinction to be made between an injury arising out of an act performed in pursuance of the course of training, that is, a required "learning activity", and one arising out of an activity which is incident to, related to, or coexistent with the pursuit of the program of training. For a case to fall within the statute there must have been sustained an injury which, but for the performance of a "learning activity" in the prescribed course of training, would not have been sustained. A meticulous examination into all the circumstances is required, including a consideration of the time and place of the incident producing the injury.

(6) Nursing home care furnished under section 1720 of title 38, United States Code is not hospitalization within the meaning of this section. Such a nursing home is an independent contractor and, accordingly, its agents and employees are not to be deemed agents and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. If additional disability results from medical or surgical treatment or examination through negligence or other wrongful acts or omissions on the part of such a nursing home, its employees, or its agents, entitlement does not exist under this section unless there was an act or omission on the part of the Department of Veterans Affairs independently giving rise to such entitlement and such acts on the part of both proximately caused the additional disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151, 1720)

[26 FR 1590, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 36 FR 7659, Apr. 23, 1971; 39 FR 34531, Sept. 26, 1974; 43 FR 51015, Nov. 2, 1978; 60 FR 14223, Mar. 16, 1995; 61 FR 25788, May 23, 1996; 64 FR 1131, Jan. 8, 1999; 69 FR 46433, Aug. 3, 2004]

§ 3.359 Determination of service connection for former members of the Armed Forces of Czechoslovakia or Poland.

Rating boards will determine whether or not the condition for which treatment is claimed by former members of the Armed Forces of Czechoslovakia or Poland under 38 U.S.C. 109(c) is service connected. This determination will be made using the same criteria that applies to determinations of service connection based on service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

[43 FR 4424, Feb. 2, 1978]

§ 3.360 Service-connected health-care eligibility of certain persons administratively discharged under other than honorable condition.

(a) *General.* The health-care and related benefits authorized by chapter 17 of title 38 U.S.C. shall be provided to certain former service persons with administrative discharges under other than honorable conditions for any disability incurred or aggravated during active military, naval, or air service in line of duty.

(b) *Discharge categorization.* With certain exceptions such benefits shall be furnished for any disability incurred or aggravated during a period of service terminated by a discharge under other than honorable conditions. Specifically, they may not be furnished for any disability incurred or aggravated during a period of service terminated by a bad conduct discharge or when one of the bars listed in § 3.12(c) applies.

(c) *Eligibility criteria.* In making determinations of health-care eligibility the same criteria will be used as is now applicable to determinations of service incurrence and in line of duty when there is no character of discharge bar.

[43 FR 15154, Apr. 11, 1978]

§ 3.361 Benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) for additional disability or death due to hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, examination, training and rehabilitation services, or compensated work therapy program.

(a) *Claims subject to this section—(1) General.* Except as provided in paragraph (2), this section applies to claims received by VA on or after October 1,

1997. This includes original claims and claims to reopen or otherwise readjudicate a previous claim for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 or its predecessors. The effective date of benefits is subject to the provisions of § 3.400(i). For claims received by VA before October 1, 1997, see § 3.358.

(2) *Compensated Work Therapy.* With respect to claims alleging disability or death due to compensated work therapy, this section applies to claims that were pending before VA on November 1, 2000, or that were received by VA after that date. The effective date of benefits is subject to the provisions of §§ 3.114(a) and 3.400(i), and shall not be earlier than November 1, 2000.

(b) *Determining whether a veteran has an additional disability.* To determine whether a veteran has an additional disability, VA compares the veteran's condition immediately before the beginning of the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, examination, training and rehabilitation services, or compensated work therapy (CWT) program upon which the claim is based to the veteran's condition after such care, treatment, examination, services, or program has stopped. VA considers each involved body part or system separately.

(c) *Establishing the cause of additional disability or death.* Claims based on additional disability or death due to hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination must meet the causation requirements of this paragraph and paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section. Claims based on additional disability or death due to training and rehabilitation services or compensated work therapy program must meet the causation requirements of paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(1) *Actual causation required.* To establish causation, the evidence must show that the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination resulted in the veteran's additional disability or death. Merely showing that a veteran received care, treatment, or examination and that the veteran has an additional disability or died does not establish cause.

(2) *Continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury.* Hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination

cannot cause the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which the care, treatment, or examination was furnished unless VA's failure to timely diagnose and properly treat the disease or injury proximately caused the continuance or natural progress. The provision of training and rehabilitation services or CWT program cannot cause the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which the services were provided.

(3) *Veteran's failure to follow medical instructions.* Additional disability or death caused by a veteran's failure to follow properly given medical instructions is not caused by hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination.

(d) *Establishing the proximate cause of additional disability or death.* The proximate cause of disability or death is the action or event that directly caused the disability or death, as distinguished from a remote contributing cause.

(1) *Care, treatment, or examination.* To establish that carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill, error in judgment, or similar instance of fault on VA's part in furnishing hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination proximately caused a veteran's additional disability or death, it must be shown that the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination caused the veteran's additional disability or death (as explained in paragraph (c) of this section); and

(i) VA failed to exercise the degree of care that would be expected of a reasonable health care provider; or

(ii) VA furnished the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination without the veteran's or, in appropriate cases, the veteran's representative's informed consent. To determine whether there was informed consent, VA will consider whether the health care providers substantially complied with the requirements of §17.32 of this chapter. Minor deviations from the requirements of §17.32 of this chapter that are immaterial under the circumstances of a case will not defeat a finding of informed consent. Consent may be express (*i.e.*, given orally or in writing) or implied under the cir-

cumstances specified in §17.32(b) of this chapter, as in emergency situations.

(2) *Events not reasonably foreseeable.* Whether the proximate cause of a veteran's additional disability or death was an event not reasonably foreseeable is in each claim to be determined based on what a reasonable health care provider would have foreseen. The event need not be completely unforeseeable or unimaginable but must be one that a reasonable health care provider would not have considered to be an ordinary risk of the treatment provided. In determining whether an event was reasonably foreseeable, VA will consider whether the risk of that event was the type of risk that a reasonable health care provider would have disclosed in connection with the informed consent procedures of §17.32 of this chapter.

(3) *Training and rehabilitation services or compensated work therapy program.* To establish that the provision of training and rehabilitation services or a CWT program proximately caused a veteran's additional disability or death, it must be shown that the veteran's participation in an essential activity or function of the training, services, or CWT program provided or authorized by VA proximately caused the disability or death. The veteran must have been participating in such training, services, or CWT program provided or authorized by VA as part of an approved rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 or as part of a CWT program under 38 U.S.C. 1718. It need not be shown that VA approved that specific activity or function, as long as the activity or function is generally accepted as being a necessary component of the training, services, or CWT program that VA provided or authorized.

(e) *Department employees and facilities.* (1) A *Department employee is an individual—*

(i) Who is appointed by the Department in the civil service under title 38, United States Code, or title 5, United States Code, as an employee as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105;

(ii) Who is engaged in furnishing hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examinations under authority of law; and

(iii) Whose day-to-day activities are subject to supervision by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) A *Department facility* is a facility over which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has direct jurisdiction.

(f) *Activities that are not hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination furnished by a Department employee or in a Department facility.* The following are not hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination furnished by a Department employee or in a Department facility within the meaning of 38 U.S.C. 1151(a):

(1) Hospital care or medical services furnished under a contract made under 38 U.S.C. 1703.

(2) Nursing home care furnished under 38 U.S.C. 1720.

(3) Hospital care or medical services, including examination, provided under 38 U.S.C. 8153 in a facility over which the Secretary does not have direct jurisdiction.

(g) *Benefits payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 for a veteran's death.* (1) *Death before January 1, 1957.* The benefit payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) to an eligible survivor for a veteran's death occurring before January 1, 1957, is death compensation. See §§ 3.5(b)(2) and 3.702 for the right to elect dependency and indemnity compensation.

(2) *Death after December 31, 1956.* The benefit payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) to an eligible survivor for a veteran's death occurring after December 31, 1956, is dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151)

[69 FR 46433, Aug. 3, 2004]

§ 3.362 Offsets under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) of benefits awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a).

(a) *Claims subject to this section.* This section applies to claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997. This includes original claims and claims to reopen or otherwise readjudicate a previous claim for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 or its predecessors.

(b) *Offset of veterans' awards of compensation.* If a veteran's disability is the basis of a judgment under 28 U.S.C. 1346(b) awarded, or a settlement or compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 entered, on or after December 1, 1962,

the amount to be offset under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) from any compensation awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) is the entire amount of the veteran's share of the judgment, settlement, or compromise, including the veteran's proportional share of attorney fees.

(c) *Offset of survivors' awards of dependency and indemnity compensation.* If a veteran's death is the basis of a judgment under 28 U.S.C. 1346(b) awarded, or a settlement or compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 entered, on or after December 1, 1962, the amount to be offset under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) from any dependency and indemnity compensation awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) to a survivor is only the amount of the judgment, settlement, or compromise representing damages for the veteran's death the survivor receives in an individual capacity or as distribution from the decedent veteran's estate of sums included in the judgment, settlement, or compromise to compensate for harm suffered by the survivor, plus the survivor's proportional share of attorney fees.

(d) *Offset of structured settlements.* This paragraph applies if a veteran's disability or death is the basis of a structured settlement or structured compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 entered on or after December 1, 1962.

(1) *The amount to be offset.* The amount to be offset under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) from benefits awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) is the veteran's or survivor's proportional share of the cost to the United States of the settlement or compromise, including the veteran's or survivor's proportional share of attorney fees.

(2) *When the offset begins.* The offset of benefits awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) begins the first month after the structured settlement or structured compromise has become final that such benefits would otherwise be paid.

(e) *Offset of award of benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39.* (1) If a judgment, settlement, or compromise covered in paragraphs (b) through (d) of this section becomes final on or after December 10, 2004, and includes an amount that is specifically designated for a purpose for which benefits are provided under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 (38 CFR 3.809 and 3.809a) or 38

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U.S.C. chapter 39 (38 CFR 3.808), and if VA awards 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 benefits after the date on which the judgment, settlement, or compromise becomes final, the amount of the award will be reduced by the amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise for the same purpose.

(2) If the amount described in paragraph (e)(1) of this section is greater than the amount of an award under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39, the excess amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise will be offset against benefits otherwise payable under 38 U.S.C. chapter 11.

[69 FR 46434, Aug. 3, 2004, as amended at 71 FR 44918, Aug. 8, 2006; 75 FR 57861, Sept. 23, 2010]

§ 3.363 Bar to benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151.

(a) *Claims subject to this section.* This section applies to claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997. This includes original claims and claims to reopen or otherwise readjudicate a previous claim for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 or its predecessors.

(b) *Administrative award, compromises, or settlements, or judgments that bar benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151.* If a veteran's disability or death was the basis of an administrative award under 28 U.S.C. 1346(b) made, or a settlement or compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 finalized, before December 1, 1962, VA may not award benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 for any period after such award, settlement, or compromise was made or became final. If a veteran's disability or death was the basis of a judgment that became final before December 1, 1962, VA may award benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 for the disability or death unless the terms of the judgment provide otherwise.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151)

[69 FR 46434, Aug. 3, 2004]

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RATING CONSIDERATIONS RELATIVE TO SPECIFIC DISEASES

§ 3.370 Pulmonary tuberculosis shown by X-ray in active service.

(a) *Active disease.* X-ray evidence alone may be adequate for grant of direct service connection for pulmonary tuberculosis. When under consideration, all available service department films and subsequent films will be secured and read by specialists at designated stations who should have a current examination report and X-ray. Resulting interpretations of service films will be accorded the same consideration for service-connection purposes as if clinically established, however, a compensable rating will not be assigned prior to establishment of an active condition by approved methods.

(b) *Inactive disease.* Where the veteran was examined at time of entrance into active service but X-ray was not made, or if made, is not available and there was no notation or other evidence of active or inactive reinfection type pulmonary tuberculosis existing prior to such entrance, it will be assumed that the condition occurred during service and direct service connection will be in order for inactive pulmonary tuberculosis shown by X-ray evidence during service in the manner prescribed in paragraph (a) of this section, unless lesions are first shown so soon after entry on active service as to compel the conclusion, on the basis of sound medical principles, that they existed prior to entry on active service.

(c) *Primary lesions.* Healed primary type tuberculosis shown at the time of entrance into active service will not be taken as evidence to rebut direct or presumptive service connection for active reinfection type pulmonary tuberculosis.

[26 FR 1591, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 43 FR 45347, Oct. 2, 1978]

§ 3.371 Presumptive service connection for tuberculous disease; wartime and service on or after January 1, 1947.

(a) *Pulmonary tuberculosis.* (1) Evidence of activity on comparative study of X-ray films showing pulmonary tuberculosis within the 3-year presumptive period provided by § 3.307(a)(3) will

be taken as establishing service connection for active pulmonary tuberculosis subsequently diagnosed by approved methods but service connection and evaluation may be assigned only from the date of such diagnosis or other evidence of clinical activity.

(2) A notation of inactive tuberculosis of the reinfection type at induction or enlistment definitely prevents the grant of service connection under § 3.307 for active tuberculosis, regardless of the fact that it was shown within the appropriate presumptive period.

(b) *Pleurisy with effusion without obvious cause.* Pleurisy with effusion with evidence of diagnostic studies ruling out obvious nontuberculous causes will qualify as active tuberculosis. The requirements for presumptive service connection will be the same as those for tuberculous pleurisy.

(c) *Tuberculous pleurisy and endobronchial tuberculosis.* Tuberculous pleurisy and endobronchial tuberculosis fall within the category of pulmonary tuberculosis for the purpose of service connection on a presumptive basis. Either will be held incurred in service when initially manifested within 36 months after the veteran's separation from service as determined under § 3.307(a)(2).

(d) *Miliary tuberculosis.* Service connection for miliary tuberculosis involving the lungs is to be determined in the same manner as for other active pulmonary tuberculosis.

[26 FR 1591, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 6387, July 6, 1962; 31 FR 4681, Mar. 19, 1966; 39 FR 34532, Sept. 26, 1974; 43 FR 45347, Oct. 2, 1978; 54 FR 34981, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 3.372 Initial grant following inactivity of tuberculosis.

When service connection is granted initially on an original or supplemental claim for pulmonary or nonpulmonary tuberculosis and there is satisfactory evidence that the condition was active previously but is now inactive (arrested), it will be presumed that the disease continued to be active for 1 year after the last date of established activity, provided there is no evidence to establish activity or inactivity in the intervening period. For a veteran entitled to receive compensation on August 19, 1968, the beginning date of

graduated ratings will commence at the end of the 1-year period. For a veteran who was not receiving or entitled to receive compensation on August 19, 1968, ratings will be assigned in accordance with the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (part 4 of this chapter). This section is not applicable to running award cases.

[33 FR 16275, Nov. 6, 1968, as amended at 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.373 [Reserved]

§ 3.374 Effect of diagnosis of active tuberculosis.

(a) *Service diagnosis.* Service department diagnosis of active pulmonary tuberculosis will be accepted unless a board of medical examiners, Clinic Director or Chief, Outpatient Service certifies, after considering all the evidence, including the favoring or opposing tuberculosis and activity, that such diagnosis was incorrect. Doubtful cases may be referred to the Chief Medical Director in Central Office.

(b) *Department of Veterans Affairs diagnosis.* Diagnosis of active pulmonary tuberculosis by the medical authorities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as the result of examination, observation, or treatment will be accepted for rating purposes. Reference to the Clinic Director or Chief, Outpatient Service, will be in order in questionable cases and, if necessary, to the Chief Medical Director in Central Office.

(c) *Private physician's diagnosis.* Diagnosis of active pulmonary tuberculosis by private physicians on the basis of their examination, observation or treatment will not be accepted to show the disease was initially manifested after discharge from active service unless confirmed by acceptable clinical, X-ray or laboratory studies, or by findings of active tuberculosis based upon acceptable hospital observation or treatment.

[26 FR 1591, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 6387, July 6, 1962; 33 FR 16275, Nov. 6, 1968; 43 FR 45348, Oct. 2, 1978]

§ 3.375 Determination of inactivity (complete arrest) in tuberculosis.

(a) *Pulmonary tuberculosis.* A veteran shown to have had pulmonary tuberculosis will be held to have reached a

condition of “complete arrest” when a diagnosis of inactive is made.

(b) *Nonpulmonary disease.* Determination of complete arrest of nonpulmonary tuberculosis requires absence of evidence of activity for 6 months. If there are two or more foci of such tuberculosis, one of which is active, the condition will not be considered to be inactive until the tuberculous process has reached arrest in its entirety.

(c) *Arrest following surgery.* Where there has been surgical excision of the lesion or organ, the date of complete arrest will be the date of discharge from the hospital, or 6 months from the date of excision, whichever is later.

[33 FR 16275, Nov. 6, 1968, as amended at 43 FR 45348, Oct. 2, 1978]

§§ 3.376–3.377 [Reserved]

§ 3.378 Changes from activity in pulmonary tuberculosis pension cases.

A permanent and total disability rating in effect during hospitalization will not be discontinued before hospital discharge on the basis of a change in classification from active. At hospital discharge, the permanent and total rating will be discontinued unless (a) the medical evidence does not support a finding of complete arrest (§ 3.375), or (b) where complete arrest is shown but the medical authorities recommend that employment not be resumed or be resumed only for short hours (not more than 4 hours a day for a 5-day week). If either of the two aforementioned conditions is met, discontinuance will be deferred pending examination in 6 months. Although complete arrest may be established upon that examination, the permanent and total rating may be extended for a further period of 6 months provided the veteran’s employment is limited to short hours as recommended by the medical authorities (not more than 4 hours a day for a 5-day week). Similar extensions may be granted under the same conditions at the end of 12 and 18 months periods. At the expiration of 24 months after hospitalization, the case will be considered under § 3.321(b) if continued short hours of employment is recommended or if other evidence warrants submission.

[43 FR 45348, Oct. 2, 1978]

§ 3.379 Anterior poliomyelitis.

If the first manifestations of acute anterior poliomyelitis present themselves in a veteran within 35 days of termination of active military service, it is probable that the infection occurred during service. If they first appear after this period, it is probable that the infection was incurred after service.

[26 FR 1592, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.380 Diseases of allergic etiology.

Diseases of allergic etiology, including bronchial asthma and urticaria, may not be disposed of routinely for compensation purposes as constitutional or developmental abnormalities. Service connection must be determined on the evidence as to existence prior to enlistment and, if so existent, a comparative study must be made of its severity at enlistment and subsequently. Increase in the degree of disability during service may not be disposed of routinely as natural progress nor as due to the inherent nature of the disease. Seasonal and other acute allergic manifestations subsiding on the absence of or removal of the allergen are generally to be regarded as acute diseases, healing without residuals. The determination as to service incurrence or aggravation must be on the whole evidentiary showing.

[26 FR 1592, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.381 Service connection of dental conditions for treatment purposes.

(a) The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) will adjudicate a claim for service connection of a dental condition for treatment purposes after the Veterans Health Administration determines a veteran meets the basic eligibility requirements of § 17.161 of this chapter and requests VBA make a determination on questions that include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- (1) Former Prisoner of War status;
- (2) Whether the veteran has a compensable or noncompensable service-connected dental condition or disability;
- (3) Whether the dental condition or disability is a result of combat wounds;

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(4) Whether the dental condition or disability is a result of service trauma; or

(5) Whether the veteran is totally disabled due to a service-connected disability.

(b) Treatable carious teeth, replaceable missing teeth, dental or alveolar abscesses, and periodontal disease are not compensable disabilities, but may nevertheless be service connected solely for the purpose of establishing eligibility for outpatient dental treatment as provided for in § 17.161 of this chapter. These conditions and other dental conditions or disabilities that are noncompensably rated under § 4.150 of this chapter may be service connected for purposes of Class II or Class II (a) dental treatment under § 17.161 of this chapter.

(c) The rating activity will consider each defective or missing tooth and each disease of the teeth and periodontal tissues separately to determine whether the condition was incurred or aggravated in line of duty during active service.

(d) In determining service connection, the condition of teeth and periodontal tissues at the time of entry into active duty will be considered. Treatment during service, including filling or extraction of a tooth, or placement of a prosthesis, will not be considered evidence of aggravation of a condition that was noted at entry, unless additional pathology developed after 180 days or more of active service.

(e) The following principles apply to dental conditions noted at entry and treated during service:

(1) Teeth noted as normal at entry will be service-connected if they were filled or extracted after 180 days or more of active service.

(2) Teeth noted as filled at entry will be service-connected if they were extracted, or if the existing filling was replaced, after 180 days or more of active service.

(3) Teeth noted as carious but restorable at entry will not be service-connected on the basis that they were filled during service. However, new caries that developed 180 days or more after such a tooth was filled will be service-connected.

(4) Teeth noted as carious but restorable at entry, whether or not filled, will be service-connected if extraction was required after 180 days or more of active service.

(5) Teeth noted at entry as non-restorable will not be service-connected, regardless of treatment during service.

(6) Teeth noted as missing at entry will not be service connected, regardless of treatment during service.

(f) The following will not be considered service-connected for treatment purposes:

(1) Calculus;

(2) Acute periodontal disease;

(3) Third molars, unless disease or pathology of the tooth developed after 180 days or more of active service, or was due to combat or in-service trauma; and

(4) Impacted or malposed teeth, and other developmental defects, unless disease or pathology of these teeth developed after 180 days or more of active service.

(g) Teeth extracted because of chronic periodontal disease will be service-connected only if they were extracted after 180 days or more of active service.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1712)

[64 FR 30393, June 8, 1999, as amended at 77 FR 4470, Jan. 30, 2012]

§ 3.382 [Reserved]

§ 3.383 Special consideration for paired organs and extremities.

(a) *Entitlement criteria.* Compensation is payable for the combinations of service-connected and nonservice-connected disabilities specified in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(5) of this section as if both disabilities were service-connected, provided the nonservice-connected disability is not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct.

(1) Impairment of vision in one eye as a result of service-connected disability and impairment of vision in the other eye as a result of non-service-connected disability and

(i) The impairment of vision in each eye is rated at a visual acuity of 20/200 or less; or

(ii) The peripheral field of vision for each eye is 20 degrees or less.

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(2) Loss or loss of use of one kidney as a result of service-connected disability and involvement of the other kidney as a result of nonservice-connected disability.

(3) Hearing impairment in one ear compensable to a degree of 10 percent or more as a result of service-connected disability and hearing impairment as a result of nonservice-connected disability that meets the provisions of § 3.385 in the other ear.

(4) Loss or loss of use of one hand or one foot as a result of service-connected disability and loss or loss of use of the other hand or foot as a result of nonservice-connected disability.

(5) Permanent service-connected disability of one lung, rated 50 percent or more disabling, in combination with a nonservice-connected disability of the other lung.

(b) *Effect of judgment or settlement.* (1) If a veteran receives any money or property of value pursuant to an award in a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action for damages for the nonservice-connected disability which established entitlement under this section, the increased compensation payable by reason of this section shall not be paid for any month following the month in which any such money or property is received until such time as the total amount of such increased compensation that would otherwise have been payable equals the total of the amount of any such money received and the fair market value of any such property received. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply, however, to any portion of such increased compensation payable for any period preceding the end of the month in which such money or property of value was received.

(2) With respect to the disability combinations specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3) and (a)(5) of this section, the provisions of this paragraph apply only to awards of increased compensation made on or after October 28, 1986.

(c) *Social security and workers' compensation.* Benefits received under social security or workers' compensation are not subject to recoupment under paragraph (b) of this section even

though such benefits may have been awarded pursuant to a judicial proceeding.

(d) *Veteran's duty to report.* Any person entitled to increased compensation under this section shall promptly report to VA the receipt of any money or property received pursuant to a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action or other right of recovery for damages for the nonservice-connected loss or loss of use of the impaired extremity upon which entitlement under this section is based. The amount to be reported is the total of the amount of money received and the fair market value of property received. Expenses incident to recovery, such as attorneys' fees, may not be deducted from the amount to be reported.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1160)

CROSS REFERENCES: § 3.385 Disability due to impaired hearing; § 4.85 Evaluation of hearing impairment.

[53 FR 23236, June 21, 1988, as amended at 69 FR 48149, Aug. 9, 2004; 74 FR 11483, Mar. 18, 2009]

§ 3.384 Psychosis.

For purposes of this part, the term "psychosis" means any of the following disorders listed in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) (see § 4.125 for availability information):

- (a) Brief Psychotic Disorder;
- (b) Delusional Disorder;
- (c) Psychotic Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition;
- (d) Other Specified Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorder;
- (e) Schizoaffective Disorder;
- (f) Schizophrenia;
- (g) Schizophreniform Disorder; and
- (h) Substance/Medication-Induced Psychotic Disorder.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1101, 1112(a) and (b))

[79 FR 45099, Aug. 4, 2014]

§ 3.385 Disability due to impaired hearing.

For the purposes of applying the laws administered by VA, impaired hearing will be considered to be a disability

when the auditory threshold in any of the frequencies 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 Hertz is 40 decibels or greater; or when the auditory thresholds for at least three of the frequencies 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, or 4000 Hertz are 26 decibels or greater; or when speech recognition scores using the Maryland CNC Test are less than 94 percent.

[59 FR 60560, Nov. 25, 1994]

EFFECTIVE DATES

§ 3.400 General.

Except as otherwise provided, the effective date of an evaluation and award of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation based on an initial claim or supplemental claim will be the date of receipt of the claim or the date entitlement arose, whichever is later. For effective date provisions regarding revision of a decision based on a supplemental claim or higher-level review, see § 3.2500.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(a))

(a) *Unless specifically provided.* On basis of facts found.

(b) *Disability benefits*—(1) *Disability pension (§ 3.3)*. An award of disability pension may not be effective prior to the date entitlement arose.

(i) *Claims received prior to October 1, 1984.* Date of receipt of claim or date on which the veteran became permanently and totally disabled, if claim is filed within one year from such date, whichever is to the advantage of the veteran.

(ii) *Claims received on or after October 1, 1984.* (A) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(1)(ii)(B) of this section, date of receipt of claim.

(B) If, within one year from the date on which the veteran became permanently and totally disabled, the veteran files a claim for a retroactive award and establishes that a physical or mental disability, which was not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct, was so incapacitating that it prevented him or her from filing a disability pension claim for at least the first 30 days immediately following the date on which the veteran became permanently and totally disabled, the disability pension award may be effective from the date of receipt of claim or the date on which the veteran became per-

manently and totally disabled, whichever is to the advantage of the veteran. While rating board judgment must be applied to the facts and circumstances of each case, extensive hospitalization will generally qualify as sufficiently incapacitating to have prevented the filing of a claim. For the purposes of this subparagraph, the presumptive provisions of § 3.342(a) do not apply.

(2) *Disability compensation*—(i) *Direct service connection (§ 3.4(b))*. Day following separation from active service or date entitlement arose if claim is received within 1 year after separation from service; otherwise, date of receipt of claim, or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. Separation from service means separation under conditions other than dishonorable from continuous active service which extended from the date the disability was incurred or aggravated.

(ii) *Presumptive service connection (§§ 3.307, 3.308, 3.309)*. Date entitlement arose, if claim is received within 1 year after separation from active duty; otherwise date of receipt of claim, or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. Where the requirements for service connection are met during service, the effective date will be the day following separation from service if there was continuous active service following the period of service on which the presumption is based and a claim is received within 1 year after separation from active duty.

(c) *Death benefits*—(1) *Death in service (38 U.S.C. 5110(j), Pub. L. 87-825) (§§ 3.4(c), 3.5(b))*. First day of the month fixed by the Secretary concerned as the date of actual or presumed death, if claim is received with 1 year after the date the initial report of actual death or finding of presumed death was made; however benefits based on a report of actual death are not payable for any period for which the claimant has received, or is entitled to receive an allowance, allotment, or service pay of the veteran.

(2) *Service-connected death after separation from service (38 U.S.C. 5110(d), Pub. L. 87-825) (§§ 3.4(c), 3.5(b))*. First day of the month in which the veteran's death occurred if claim is received within 1 year after the date of

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death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(3) *Nonservice-connected death after separation from service.* (i) For awards based on claims received prior to October 1, 1984, or on or after December 10, 2004, first day of the month in which the veteran's death occurred if claim is received within one year after the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(ii) For awards based on claims received between October 1, 1984, and December 9, 2004, first day of the month in which the veteran's death occurred if claim is received within 45 days after the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(d))

(4) *Dependency and indemnity compensation—(i) Deaths prior to January 1, 1957 (§ 3.702).* Date of receipt of election.

(ii) *Child (38 U.S.C. 5110(e), Pub. L. 87-835).* First day of the month in which entitlement arose if claim is received within 1 year after the date of entitlement; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(iii) *Deaths on or after May 1, 1957 (in-service waiver cases) (§§ 3.5(b)(3) and 3.702).* Date of receipt of election. (See § 3.114(a)).

(d) [Reserved]

(e) *Apportionment (§§ 3.450 through 3.461, 3.551).* On original claims, in accordance with the facts found. On other than original claims from the first day of the month following the month in which:

(1) Claim is received for apportionment of a veteran's award, except that where payments to him (her) have been interrupted, apportionment will be effective the day following date of last payment if a claim for apportionment is received within 1 year after that date;

(2) Notice is received that a child included in the surviving spouse's award is not in the surviving spouse's custody, except that where payments to the surviving spouse have been interrupted, apportionment will be effective the day following date of last payment if such notice is received within 1 year after that date.

(f) *Federal employees' compensation cases (§ 3.708).* Date authorized by appli-

cable law, subject to any payments made by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act over the same period of time.

(g) *Correction of military records (38 U.S.C. 5110(i); Pub. L. 87-825).* Where entitlement is established because of the correction, change or modification of a military record, or of a discharge or dismissal, by a Board established under 10 U.S.C. 1552 or 1553, or because of other corrective action by competent military naval, or air authority, the award will be effective from the latest of these dates:

(1) Date application for change, correction, or modification was filed with the service department, in either an original or a disallowed claim;

(2) Date of receipt of claim if claim was disallowed; or

(3) One year prior to date of reopening of disallowed claim.

(h) *Difference of opinion (§ 3.105).* (1) As to decisions not finally adjudicated (see § 3.160(d)) prior to timely receipt of an application for higher-level review, or prior to readjudication on VA initiative, the date from which benefits would have been payable if the former decision had been favorable.

(2) As to decisions which have been finally adjudicated (see § 3.160(d)), and notwithstanding other provisions of this section, the date entitlement arose, but not earlier than the date of receipt of the supplemental claim.

(3) As to decisions which have been finally adjudicated (see 3.160(d)) and readjudication is undertaken solely on VA initiative, the date of Central Office approval authorizing a favorable decision or the date of the favorable Board of Veterans' Appeals decision.

(4) Where the initial determination for the purpose of death benefits is favorable, the commencing date will be determined without regard to the fact that the action may reverse, on a difference of opinion, an unfavorable decision for disability purposes by an adjudicative agency other than the Board of Veterans Appeals, which was in effect at the date of the veteran's death.

(i) *Disability or death due to hospitalization, etc. (38 U.S.C. 5110(c), (d); Public Law 87-825; §§ 3.358, 3.361, and*

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3.800.) (1) *Disability*. Date injury or aggravation was suffered if claim is received within 1 year after that date; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(2) *Death*. First day of month in which the veteran's death occurred if a claim is received within 1 year following the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(j) *Election of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits* (§ 3.700 series). (1) Unless otherwise provided, the date of receipt of election, subject to prior payments.

(2) July 1, 1960, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86-211, where pension is payable for June 30, 1960, under the law in effect on that date, including an award approved after that date, if the election is filed within (generally) 120 days from date of notice of the award. The award will be subject to prior payments over the same period of time.

(3) January 1, 1965, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 88-664 if there was basic eligibility for pension on June 30, 1960, under the law in effect on that date and an election if filed prior to May 1, 1965.

(4) January 1, 1965, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 88-664 if there was basic eligibility on that date for pension on the basis of service in the Indian wars or Spanish-American War and an election is filed prior to May 1, 1965.

(5) January 1, 1969, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432), as amended by Pub. L. 90-275 (82 Stat. 64), if there was basic eligibility for pension on June 30, 1960, under the law in effect on that date and an election is filed prior to May 1, 1969.

(6) August 1, 1972, as to pension payable under Pub. L. (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 92-328 (86 Stat. 393) if there was basic eligibility on that date based on death of a veteran of the Spanish-American War and an election is filed prior to December 1, 1972.

(k) *Error* (§ 3.105). Date from which benefits would have been payable if the corrected decision had been made on the date of the reversed decision.

(l) *Foreign residence*. (See § 3.653).

(m) *Forfeiture* (§§ 3.901, 3.902). Day following date of last payment on award to payee who forfeited.

(n) *Guardian*. Day following date of last payment to prior payee or fiduciary.

NOTE: Award to guardian shall include amounts withheld for possible apportionments as well as money in Personal Funds of Patients.

(o) *Increases* (38 U.S.C. 5110(a) and 5110(b)(2), Pub. L. 94-71, 89 Stat. 395; §§ 3.109, 3.156, 3.157—(1) *General*. Except as provided in paragraph (o)(2) of this section and § 3.401(b), date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. A retroactive increase or additional benefit will not be awarded after basic entitlement has been terminated, such as by severance of service connection.

(2) *Disability compensation*. Earliest date as of which it is factually ascertainable based on all evidence of record that an increase in disability had occurred if a complete claim or intent to file a claim is received within 1 year from such date, otherwise, date of receipt of claim. When medical records indicate an increase in a disability, receipt of such medical records may be used to establish effective date(s) for retroactive benefits based on facts found of an increase in a disability only if a complete claim or intent to file a claim for an increase is received within 1 year of the date of the report of examination, hospitalization, or medical treatment. The provisions of this paragraph apply only when such reports relate to examination or treatment of a disability for which service-connection has previously been established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5101)

(p) *Liberalizing laws and Department of Veterans Affairs issues*. See § 3.114.

(q) *New and material evidence* (§ 3.156) *other than service department records*—(1) *Received within appeal period or prior to appellate decision*. The effective date will be as though the former decision had not been rendered. See §§ 20.1103, 20.1104 and 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter.

(2) *Received after final disallowance*. Date of receipt of new claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later.

(r) *Reopened claims*. (§§ 3.109, 3.156, 3.157, 3.160(e)) Date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is

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later, except as provided in § 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(s) *Renouncement* (§ 3.106). Except as provided in § 3.106(c), date of receipt of new claim.

(t) *Whereabouts now known*. (See § 3.158(c).)

(u) *Void, annulled or terminated marriage of a child* (38 U.S.C. 5110 (a), (k), (l); *Pub. L. 93–527, 88 Stat. 1702; § 3.55*)—(1) *Void*. Date the parties ceased to cohabit or date of receipt of claim, whichever is later.

(2) *Annulled*. Date the decree of annulment became final if claim is filed within 1 year after that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim.

(3) *Death*. Date of death if claim is filed within 1 year after that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim. Benefits are not payable unless the provisions of § 3.55(b) of this part are met.

(4) *Divorce*. Date the decree became final if claim is filed within 1 year of that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim. Benefits are not payable unless the provisions of § 3.55(b) of this part are met.

(v) *Termination of remarriage of surviving spouse* (38 U.S.C. 5110(a), (k); 38 U.S.C. 103(d) and 3010(l) effective January 1, 1971; § 3.55)—(1) *Void*. Date the parties ceased to cohabit or date of receipt of claim, whichever is the later.

(2) *Annulled*. Date the decree of annulment became final if claim is filed within 1 year after that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim.

(3) *Death*. Date of death if claim is filed within 1 year after that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim. Benefits are not payable unless the provisions of § 3.55(a) of this part are met.

(4) *Divorce*. Date the decree became final if claim is filed within 1 year after that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim. Benefits are not payable unless the provisions of § 3.55(a) of this part are met.

(w) *Termination of relationship or conduct resulting in restriction on payment of benefits* (38 U.S.C. 5110(m), effective January 1, 1971; §§ 3.50(b)(2) and 3.55). Date of receipt of application filed after termination of relationship and after December 31, 1970. Benefits are not payable

unless the provisions of § 3.55(a), as applicable, are met.

(x) *Effective date of determination of incompetency* (§ 3.353). Date of rating of incompetency. (Not applicable to an incompetency determination made for insurance purposes under 38 U.S.C. 1922).

(y) *Effective date of determination restoring competency* (§ 3.353). Date shown by evidence of record that competency was regained.

(z) *Claims based on service in the Women's Air Forces Service Pilots (WASP), or on service in a similarly situated group* (*Pub. L. 95–202*). (1) Original claim: Date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later, or as otherwise provided under this section (e.g., paragraph (b)(1) of this section) except that no benefits shall be awarded for any period prior to November 23, 1977.

(2) Reopened claims received prior to the effective date provided in § 19.2(a) of this chapter: Latest of the following dates:

(i) November 23, 1977.

(ii) Date entitlement arose.

(iii) One year prior to date of receipt of reopened claim.

(3) Supplemental claims received more than one year after notice of decision: Latest of the following dates:

(i) Date entitlement arose.

(ii) One year prior to date of receipt of a supplemental claim.

[26 FR 1593, Feb. 24, 1961]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.400, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.401 Veterans.

Awards of pension or compensation payable to or for a veteran will be effective as follows:

(a) *Aid and attendance and housebound benefits*. (1) Except as provided in § 3.400(o)(2), the date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. However, when an award of pension or compensation based on an original or supplemental claim is effective for a period prior to the date of receipt of the claim, any additional pension or compensation payable by reason of need for aid and attendance or housebound status shall also be awarded for

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any part of the award's retroactive period for which entitlement to the additional benefit is established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(b)(1), (3))

(2) Date of departure from hospital, institution, or domiciliary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) Spouse, additional compensation for aid and attendance: Date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. However, when an award of disability compensation based on an original or supplemental claim is effective for a period prior to date of receipt of the claim additional disability compensation payable to a veteran by reason of the veteran's spouse's need for aid and attendance shall also be awarded for any part of the award's retroactive period for which the spouse's entitlement to aid and attendance is established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(b)(1), (2))

(b) *Dependent, additional compensation or pension for.* Latest of the following dates:

(1) Date of claim. This term means the following, listed in their order of applicability:

(i) Date of veteran's marriage, or birth of his or her child, or, adoption of a child, if the evidence of the event is received within 1 year of the event; otherwise.

(ii) Date notice is received of the dependent's existence, if evidence is received within 1 year of the Department of Veterans Affairs request.

(2) Date dependency arises.

(3) Effective date of the qualifying disability rating provided evidence of dependency is received within 1 year of notification of such rating action.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(f))

(4) Date of commencement of veteran's award. (Other increases, see § 3.400(o). For school attendance see § 3.667.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110 (f), (n))

(c) *Divorce of veteran and spouse.* See § 3.501(d).

(d) [Reserved]

(e) *Retirement pay* (§ 3.750)—(1) *Election.* Date of entitlement if timely filed. Subject to prior payments of retirement pay.

(2) *Waiver.* Day following date of discontinuance or reduction of retirement pay.

(3) *Reelection.* Day the reelection is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(f) *Service pension* (§ 3.3(a)). Date of receipt of claim.

(g) *Tuberculosis, special compensation for arrested.* As of the date the graduated evaluation of the disability or compensation for that degree of disablement combined with other service-connected disabilities would provide compensation payable at a rate less than \$67. See § 3.350(g).

(h) *Temporary increase "General Policy in Rating," 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities*—(1) *Section 4.29 of this chapter.* Date of entrance into hospital, after 21 days of continuous hospitalization for treatment.

(2) *Section 4.30 of this chapter.* Date of entrance into hospital, after discharge from hospitalization (regular or release to non-bed care).

(i) *Increased disability pension based on attainment of age 78.* First day of the month during which veteran attains age 78.

[26 FR 1594, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11889, Dec. 1, 1962; 36 FR 4599, Mar. 10, 1971; 39 FR 17222, Mar. 14, 1974; 41 FR 36493, Aug. 30, 1976; 41 FR 55874, Dec. 23, 1976; 41 FR 56804, Dec. 30, 1976; 45 FR 34886, May 23, 1980; 54 FR 34981, Aug. 23, 1989; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997; 83 FR 32738, July 13, 2018; 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.402 Surviving spouse.

Awards of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to or for a surviving spouse will be effective as follows:

(a) *Additional allowance of dependency and indemnity compensation for children* § 3.5(e). Commencing date of surviving spouse's award. See § 3.400(c).

(b) *Legal surviving spouse entitled.* See § 3.657.

(c) *Aid and attendance and housebound benefits.* (1) Date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose whichever is later. However, when an award of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) or pension based on an original

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or supplemental claim is effective for a period prior to date of receipt of the claim, any additional DIC or pension payable to the surviving spouse by reason of need for aid and attendance or housebound status shall also be awarded for any part of the award's retroactive period for which entitlement to the additional benefit is established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(d))

(2) Date of departure from hospital, institutional or domiciliary care at Department of Veterans Affairs expense. This is applicable only to aid and attendance benefits. Housebound benefits may be awarded during hospitalization at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[45 FR 34887, May 23, 1980, as amended at 84 FR 170, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.403 Children.

(a) Awards of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to or for a child, or to or for a veteran or surviving spouse on behalf of such child, will be effective as follows:

(1) *Permanently incapable of selfsupport (§ 3.57(a)(3))*. In original claims, date fixed by §§ 3.400(b) or (c) or 3.401(b). In claims for continuation of payments, 18th birthday if the condition is claimed prior to or within 1 year after that date; otherwise from date of receipt of claim.

(2) *Majority (§ 13.100)*. Direct payment to child if competent, from date of majority or, date of last payment, whichever is the earlier date.

(3) *Posthumous child*. Date of child's birth if proof of birth is received within 1 year of that date, or if a claim or an intent to file a claim as set forth in § 3.155(b), is received within 1 year after the veteran's death; otherwise, date of claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(n))

(4) *School attendance*. (See § 3.667.)

(5) *Adopted child*. Date of adoption either interlocutory or final or date of adoptive placement agreement, but not earlier than the date from which benefits are otherwise payable.

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(b) *Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1805 for an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a Vietnam veteran*. Except as provided in § 3.814(e), an award of the monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1805 to or for an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a Vietnam veteran will be effective either date of birth if claim is received within one year of that date, or the later of the date of claim or the date entitlement arose, but not earlier than October 1, 1997.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805, 1832, 5110)

(c) *Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1815 for an individual with covered birth defects who is a child of a woman Vietnam veteran*. Except as provided in § 3.114(a) or § 3.815(i), an award of the monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1815 to or for an individual with one or more covered birth defects who is a child of a woman Vietnam veteran will be effective as of the date VA received the claim (or the date of birth if the claim is received within one year of that date), the date entitlement arose, or December 1, 2001, whichever is latest.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1815, 1832, 1834, 5110)

(d) *Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1821 for an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea*. Except as provided in § 3.814(e), an award of the monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1821 based on the existence of an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea will be effective from either the date of birth if claim is received within 1 year of that date, or the later of the date of claim or date entitlement arose, but not earlier than December 16, 2003.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1821, 1832, 5110)

[26 FR 1594, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11889, Dec. 1, 1962; 36 FR 4599, Mar. 10, 1971; 38 FR 872, Jan. 5, 1973; 39 FR 20204, June 7, 1974; 41 FR 36493, Aug. 30, 1976; 45 FR 34887, May 23, 1980; 62 FR 51279, Sept. 30, 1997; 67 FR 49587, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4248, Jan. 25, 2011; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014; 83 FR 32738, July 13, 2018]

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§ 3.404 Parents.

Awards of additional amounts of compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation based on a parent's need for aid and attendance will be effective the date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. However, when an award of dependency and indemnity compensation based on an original or supplemental claim is effective for a period prior to date of receipt of claim, any additional dependency and indemnity compensation payable by reason of need for aid and attendance may also be awarded for any part of the award's retroactive period for which entitlement to aid and attendance is established. When the parent is provided hospital, institutional or domiciliary care at Department of Veterans Affairs expense, the effective date will be the date of departure therefrom.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(d))

[45 FR 34887, May 23, 1980, as amended at 84 FR 171, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.405 Filipino veterans and their survivors; benefits at the full-dollar rate.

Public Laws 106-377 and 108-183, which provide disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation at full-dollar rates to certain Filipino veterans and their survivors, are considered liberalizing laws. As such, the provisions of 38 CFR 3.114(a) apply when determining the effective date of an award. If the requirements of § 3.114(a) are not satisfied, then the effective date of an award of benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 will be determined as follows:

(a) *Initial entitlement to full-dollar rate.* The latest of the following:

- (1) Date entitlement arose;
- (2) Date on which the veteran or survivor first met the residency and citizenship or permanent resident alien status requirements in § 3.42, if VA receives evidence of this within one year of that date; or
- (3) Effective date of service connection, provided VA receives evidence that the veteran or survivor meets the residency and citizenship or permanent resident alien status requirements in § 3.42 within one year of the date of no-

tification of the decision establishing service connection.

(b) *Resumption of full-dollar rate.* (1) Date the veteran or survivor returned to the United States after an absence of more than 60 consecutive days; or

(2) First day of the calendar year following the year in which the veteran or survivor was absent from the United States for a total of 183 days or more, or the first day after that date that the veteran or survivor returns to the United States.

[71 FR 8221, Feb. 16, 2006]

APPORTIONMENTS

§ 3.450 General.

(a)(1) All or any part of the pension, compensation, or emergency officers' retirement pay payable on account of any veteran may be apportioned.

(i) On behalf of his or her spouse, children, or dependent parents if the veteran is incompetent and is being furnished hospital treatment, institutional, or domiciliary care by the United States, or any political subdivision thereof.

(ii) If the veteran is not residing with his or her spouse, or if the veteran's children are not residing with the veteran and the veteran is not reasonably discharging his or her responsibility for the spouse's or children's support.

(2) Where any of the children of a deceased veteran are not living with the veteran's surviving spouse, the pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation otherwise payable to the surviving spouse may be apportioned.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5307)

(b) Except as provided in § 3.458(e), no apportionment of disability or death benefits will be made or changed solely because a child has entered active duty with the air, military, or naval services of the United States.

(c) No apportionment will be made where the veteran, the veteran's spouse (when paid "as wife" or "as husband"), surviving spouse, or fiduciary is providing for dependents. The additional benefits for such dependents will be paid to the veteran, spouse, surviving spouse, or fiduciary.

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(d) Any amounts payable for children under §§ 3.459, 3.460 and 3.461 will be equally divided among the children.

(e) The amount payable for a child in custody of and residing with the surviving spouse shall be paid to the surviving spouse. Amounts payable to a surviving spouse for a child in the surviving spouse's custody but residing with someone else may be apportioned if the surviving spouse is not reasonably contributing to the child's support.

(f) Prior to release of any amounts the relationship of the claimant and the dependency of a parent will be fully developed, and the necessary evidence secured.

(g) The provisions of § 3.460 are applicable where the surviving spouse is entitled to a higher rate of pension under the circumstances described in that section.

[26 FR 1594, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 26 FR 7266, Aug. 11, 1961; 27 FR 6974, July 24, 1962; 32 FR 13226, Sept. 19, 1967; 37 FR 6678, Apr. 1, 1972; 44 FR 45939, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.451 Special apportionments.

Without regard to any other provision regarding apportionment where hardship is shown to exist, pension, compensation, emergency officers' retirement pay, or dependency and indemnity compensation may be specially apportioned between the veteran and his or her dependents or the surviving spouse and children on the basis of the facts in the individual case as long as it does not cause undue hardship to the other persons in interest, except as to those cases covered by § 3.458(b) and (c). In determining the basis for special apportionment, consideration will be given such factors as: Amount of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits payable; other resources and income of the veteran and those dependents in whose behalf apportionment is claimed; and special needs of the veteran, his or her dependents, and the apportionment claimants. The amount apportioned should generally be consistent with the total number of dependents involved. Ordinarily, apportionment of more than 50 percent of the veteran's benefits would constitute undue hardship on him or her while apportionment of less than 20 percent of

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his or her benefits would not provide a reasonable amount for any apportionnee.

[44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.452 Situations when benefits may be apportioned.

Veterans benefits may be apportioned:

(a) If the veteran is not residing with his or her spouse or his or her children and a claim for apportionment is filed for or on behalf of the spouse or children.

(b) Pending the appointment of a guardian or other fiduciary.

(c)(1) Where an incompetent veteran without a fiduciary is receiving institutional care by the United States or a political subdivision, his or her benefit may be apportioned for a spouse or child, or, except as provided in paragraph (c)(2), for a dependent parent, unless such benefit is paid to a spouse ("as wife" or "as husband") for the use of the veteran and his or her dependents.

(2) Where a married veteran is receiving section 306 or improved pension and the amount payable is reduced under § 3.551(c) because of hospitalization, an apportionment may be paid to the veteran's spouse as provided in § 3.454(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a); 5307; 5503(a))

(d) Where additional compensation is payable on behalf of a parent and the veteran or his or her guardian neglects or refuses to contribute such an amount to the support of the parent the additional compensation will be paid to the parent upon receipt of a claim.

CROSS REFERENCES: Disappearance of veteran. See § 3.656. Reduction because of hospitalization. See § 3.551. Penal institutions. See § 3.666.

[26 FR 7266, Aug. 11, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 6974, July 24, 1962; 40 FR 21724, May 19, 1975; 44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979; 66 FR 48560, Sept. 21, 2001; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003; 83 FR 32738, July 13, 2018]

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§ 3.453 Veterans compensation or service pension or retirement pay.

Rates of apportionment of disability compensation, service pension or retirement pay will be determined under § 3.451.

[26 FR 7266, Aug. 11, 1961]

§ 3.454 Veterans disability pension.

Apportionment of disability pension will be as follows:

(a) Where a veteran with spouse, or child is incompetent and without legal fiduciary and is maintained in an institution by the United States or any political subdivision thereof, \$25 monthly will be paid as an institutional award to the Director of a Department of Veterans Affairs medical center or chief officer of a non-Department of Veterans Affairs institution for the use of the veteran, and the balance will be paid to the dependent or dependents. If the veteran has no spouse, or child but has a dependent parent, apportionment will be in accordance with § 3.451.

(b)(1) Where the amount of section 306 pension payable to a married veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b), as in effect on December 31, 1978, is reduced to \$50 monthly under § 3.551(c), an apportionment may be made to such veteran's spouse upon an affirmative showing of hardship. The amount of the apportionment generally will be the difference between \$50 and the total amount of pension payable on December 31, 1978.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(2) Where the amount of improved pension payable to a married veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) is reduced to \$60 monthly under § 3.551(d) or (e)(2), an apportionment may be made to such veteran's spouse upon an affirmative showing of hardship. The amount of the apportionment generally will be the difference between \$50 and the rate payable if pension was being paid under 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) including the additional amount payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521(e) if the veteran is so entitled.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(3) Where the amount of improved pension payable to a married veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) is reduced to \$90 monthly under § 3.551(e)(1) an appor-

tionment may be made to such veteran's spouse upon an affirmative showing of hardship. The amount of the apportionment generally will be the difference between \$90 and the rate payable if pension was being paid under 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) including the additional amount payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521(e) if the veteran is so entitled.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

[40 FR 36329, Aug. 20, 1975, as amended at 44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979; 56 FR 65850, 65851, Dec. 19, 1991; 57 FR 7847, Mar. 4, 1992; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.458 Veteran's benefits not apportionable.

Veteran's benefits will not be apportioned:

(a) Where the total benefit payable to the disabled person does not permit payment of a reasonable amount to any apportionnee.

(b) Where the spouse of the disabled person has been found guilty of conjugal infidelity by a court having proper jurisdiction.

(c) For purported or legal spouse of the veteran if it has been determined that he or she has lived with another person and held herself or himself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person, except where such relationship was entered into in good faith with a reasonable basis (for example trickery on the part of the veteran) for the spouse believing that the marriage to the veteran was legally terminated. No apportionment to the spouse will thereafter be made unless there has been a reconciliation and later estrangement.

(d) Where the child of the disabled person has been legally adopted by another person.

(e) Where a child enters the active military, air, or naval service, any additional amount will be paid to the veteran unless such child is included in an existing apportionment to an estranged spouse. No adjustment in the apportioned award will be made based on the child's entry into service.

(f)(1) For the spouse, child, father or mother of a disabled veteran, where

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forfeiture was declared prior to September 2, 1959, if the dependent is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to have been guilty of mutiny, treason, sabotage, or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or its allies.

(2) For any dependent of a disabled veteran, or surviving spouse where forfeiture of benefits by a person primarily entitled was declared after September 1, 1959, by reason of fraud, treasonable acts, or subversive activities.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(b); 6104(c); 6105(a))

(g) Until the estranged spouse of a veteran files claim for an apportioned share. If there are any children of the veteran not in his or her custody an apportionment will not be authorized unless and until a claim for an apportioned share is filed in their behalf.

CROSS REFERENCES: Child. See § 3.57. Child adopted out of family. See § 3.58.

[26 FR 7266, Aug. 11, 1961, as amended at 40 FR 21724, May 19, 1975; 44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979; 80 FR 48451, Aug. 13, 2015]

§ 3.459 Death compensation.

(a) Death compensation will be apportioned if the child or children of the deceased veteran are not in the custody of the surviving spouse.

(b) The surviving spouse may not be paid less than \$65 monthly plus the amount of an aid and attendance allowance where applicable.

[40 FR 21725, May 19, 1975, as amended at 44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.460 Death pension.

Death pension will be apportioned if the child or children of the deceased veteran are not in the custody of the surviving spouse. Where the surviving spouse's rate is in excess of \$70 monthly because of having been the spouse of the veteran during service or because of need for regular aid and attendance, the additional amount will be added to the surviving spouse's share.

(a) *Civil, Indian and Spanish-American wars.* Where pension is payable under 38 U.S.C. 1532, 1534, or 1536 apportionment will be based on the facts in the individual case in accordance with § 3.451.

(b) *Section 306 and old-law death pension.* Appointment of benefits provided

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under these pension programs will be at rates approved by the Under Secretary for Benefits except when the facts and circumstances in a case warrant special apportionment under § 3.451.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5307)

(c) *Improved death pension.* Apportionment of the benefits provided under this program shall be made under the special apportionment provision of § 3.451.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5307)

[41 FR 21324, May 25, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 14018, Apr. 4, 1978; 44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996]

§ 3.461 Dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) *Conditions under which apportionment may be made.* The surviving spouse's award of dependency and indemnity compensation will be apportioned where there is a child or children under 18 years of age and not in the custody of the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse's award of dependency and indemnity compensation will not be apportioned under this condition for a child over the age of 18 years.

(b) *Rates payable.* (1) The share for each of the children under 18 years of age, including those in the surviving spouse's custody as well as those who are not in such custody, will be at rates approved by the Under Secretary for Benefits except when the facts and circumstances in a case warrant special apportionment under § 3.451. The share for the surviving spouse will be the difference between the children's share and the total amount payable. In the application of this rule, however, the surviving spouse's share will not be reduced to an amount less than 50 percent of that to which the surviving spouse would otherwise be entitled.

(2) The additional amount of aid and attendance, where applicable, will be added to the surviving spouse's share and not otherwise included in the computation.

(3) Where the surviving spouse has elected to receive dependency and indemnity compensation instead of death compensation, the share of dependency

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and indemnity compensation for a child or children under 18 years of age will be whichever is the greater:

(i) The apportioned share computed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section; or

(ii) The share which would have been payable as death compensation but not in excess of the total dependency and indemnity compensation.

[43 FR 14018, Apr. 4, 1978, as amended at 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996]

REDUCTIONS AND DISCONTINUANCES

§ 3.500 General.

The effective date of a rating which results in the reduction or discontinuance of an award will be in accordance with the facts found except as provided in § 3.105. The effective date of reduction or discontinuance of an award of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation for a payee or dependent will be the earliest of the dates stated in these paragraphs unless otherwise provided. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be effective the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b))

(a) *Except as otherwise provided (38 U.S.C. 5112(a))*. In accordance with the facts found.

(b) *Error; payee's or administrative (38 U.S.C. 5112(b), (9), (10))*. (1) Effective date of award or day preceding act, whichever is later, but not prior to the date entitlement ceased, on an erroneous award based on an act of commission or omission by a payee or with the payee's knowledge.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (r) of this section, and § 3.501 (e) and (g), date of last payment on an erroneous award based solely on administrative error or error in judgment.

(c) *Annual income*. See § 3.660.

(d) *Apportionment (§§ 3.450 series; § 3.556)*. (1) Except as otherwise provided, date of last payment when reason for apportionment no longer exists.

(2) Where pension was apportioned under § 3.551(c), day preceding date of veteran's release from hospital, unless overpayment would result; date of last

payment if necessary to avoid overpayment.

(e) *Federal employees' compensation (§ 3.708)*. The day preceding the date the award of benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act became effective. If children on rolls and surviving spouse has primary title, award to children discontinued same date as surviving spouse's award.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 8116)

(f) *Contested claims § 3.402(b) and § subpart F of part 20 of this chapter*. Date of last payment.

(g) *Death (38 U.S.C. 5112 (a), (b))—(1) Payee (includes apportionee)*. Last day of month before death.

(2) *Dependent of payee (includes apportionee)*:

(i) Death prior to October 1, 1982: last day of the calendar year in which death occurred.

(ii) Death on or after October 1, 1982: last day of the month in which death occurred, except that section 306 and old-law pension reductions or terminations will continue to be effective the last day of the calendar year in which death occurred.

(3) *Veteran receiving retirement pay*. Date of death.

(h) *Dependency of parent (38 U.S.C. 5112; Pub. L. 90-275; §§ 3.4(a), (b)(2), 3.250, 3.551(b) and 3.660)*. See § 3.660.

(i) *Election of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits (§ 3.700 series)*. Day preceding beginning date of award under other law.

(j) *Foreign residence (38 U.S.C. 5308(a))*. See § 3.653.

(k) *Fraud (38 U.S.C. 6103(a), (d); §§ 3.669 and 3.901)*. Beginning date of award or day preceding date of fraudulent act, whichever is later.

(l)–(m) [Reserved]

(n) *Marriage (or remarriage) (38 U.S.C. 101(3), 5112 (b))—(1) Payee (includes apportionee)*. Last day of month before marriage.

(2) *Dependent of payee (includes apportionee)*:

(i) Marriage prior to October 1, 1982: last day of the calendar year in which marriage occurred.

(ii) Marriage on or after October 1, 1982: last day of the month in which marriage occurred, except that section 306 and old-law pension reductions or

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terminations will continue to be effective the last day of the calendar year in which marriage occurred.

(3) *Conduct of surviving spouse.* Last day of month before inception of relationship.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4), 501)

(o) *Penal institutions.* See § 3.666.

(p) *Philippines (38 U.S.C. 107(a)(3); § 3.40).* Date of last payment when recognition of service withdrawn.

(q) *Renouncement (§ 3.106).* Last day of the month in which the renouncement is received.

(r) *Service connection (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6); § 3.105).* Last day of month following 60 days after notice to payee. Applies to reduced evaluation, and severance of service connection.

(s) *Treasonable acts or subversive activities (38 U.S.C. 6104 and 6105; §§ 3.902, 3.903).* (1) *Treasonable acts.* Date of the forfeiture decision or date of last payment, whichever is earlier.

(2) *Subversive activities.* Beginning date of award or day preceding date of commission of subversive activities for which convicted, whichever is later.

(t) *Whereabouts unknown (§§ 3.158, 3.656).* Date of last payment.

(u) *Change in law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or interpretation.* See § 3.114.

(v) *Failure to furnish evidence of continued eligibility.* See § 3.652 (a) and (b).

(w) *Failure to furnish Social Security number.* Last day of the month during which the 60 day period following the date of VA request expires.

(x) *Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 (§ 3.715).* (Compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation only.) Last day of the month preceding the month in which payment under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 is issued.

(y) *Compensation for certain disabilities due to undiagnosed illnesses (§§ 3.105, 3.317).* Last day of the month in which the 60-day period following notice to the payee of the final rating action expires. This applies to both reduced evaluations and severance of service connection.

(Authority: Pub. L. 103-446; 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 8301)

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to return questionnaire. See § 3.661(b).

[26 FR 1596, Feb. 24, 1961]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.500, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.501 Veterans.

The effective date of discontinuance of pension or compensation to or for a veteran will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(a) *Active service pay (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(3); Pub. L. 87-825; § 3.700(a)).* Day preceding entrance on active duty. See § 3.654.

(b) *Aid and attendance—(1) Section 3.552(b)(1).* Last day of calendar month following month in which veteran is hospitalized at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(2) *Section 3.552(b)(2).* Last day of calendar month following month in which veteran hospitalized at United States Government expense.

(3) *Aid and attendance for spouse.* End of month in which award action is taken if need for aid and attendance has ceased.

(c) *Disappearance of veteran.* See § 3.656.

(d) *Divorce or annulment (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(2)):*

(1) Divorce or annulment prior to October 1, 1982: last day of the calendar year in which divorce or annulment occurred.

(2) Divorce or annulment on or after October 1, 1982: last day of the month in which divorce or annulment occurred, except that section 306 and old-law pension reductions or terminations will continue to be effective the last day of the calendar year in which divorce or annulment occurred.

(e) *Employability regained (38 U.S.C. 5112(b) (5), (6); Pub. L. 87-825; § 3.105)—(1) Pension.* Last day of month in which discontinuance is approved.

(2) *Compensation.* Last day of month following 60 days after notice to payee.

(f) *Employment questionnaire, failure to return.* Reduce award to the amount payable for the schedular evaluation

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shown in the current rating as of the day following the date of last payment.

(g) *Evaluation reduced* (38 U.S.C. 5112(b) (5), (6); Pub. L. 87-825; § 3.105)—(1) *Pension*. Last day of month in which reduction or discontinuance is approved.

(2) *Compensation*. Last day of month following 60 days after notice to payee.

(h) *Examination; failure to report*. See § 3.655.

(i) *Hospitalization*—(1) *Section 3.551(b)*. Last day of the sixth calendar month following admission if veteran without dependents.

(2) *Section 3.551(c)*. (i) Last day of the second calendar month following admission to domiciliary care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate provided for a veteran without dependents. (ii) Last day of the third calendar month following admission for hospital or nursing home care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate provided for a veteran without dependents. (iii) Upon readmission to hospital, domiciliary, or nursing home care within 6 months of a period for which pension was reduced under § 3.551(c)(1), the last day of the month of such readmission.

(3) *Section 3.552(b)* Upon readmission to hospital care within 6 months of a period of hospital care for which pension was affected by the provisions of § 3.552(b)(1) and (2) or § 3.552(k) and discharge or release was against medical advice or was the result of disciplinary action, the day preceding the date of such readmission.

(4) *Section 3.551(d)* (i) Last day of the second calendar month following admission to domiciliary care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate for a veteran without dependents.

(ii) Last day of the third calendar month following admission for hospitalization or nursing home care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate for a veteran without dependents.

(iii) Upon readmission to hospital, domiciliary, or nursing home care within 6 months of a period for which pension was reduced under § 3.551(d)(1)

or (2), the last day of the month of such readmission.

(5) *Section 3.551(e)* (i) Last day of the third calendar month following admission to domiciliary or nursing home care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate for a veteran without dependents. (ii) Upon readmission to domiciliary or nursing home care within 6 months of a period of domiciliary or nursing home care for which pension was reduced under § 3.551(e)(1), the last day of the month of such readmission.

(6) *Section 3.551(h)*. (i) Last day of the calendar month in which Medicaid payments begin, last day of the month following 60 days after issuance of a prereduction notice required under § 3.103(b)(2), or the earliest date on which payment may be reduced without creating an overpayment, whichever date is later; or

(ii) If the veteran willfully conceals information necessary to make the reduction, the last day of the month in which that willful concealment occurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

(j) [Reserved]

(k) *Lump-sum readjustment pay*. See § 3.700(a)(2).

(1) *Retirement pay* (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(3); Pub. L. 87-825; § 3.750). Day before effective date of retirement pay.

(m) *Temporary increase* (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(8); § 4.29 of this chapter). Last day of month in which hospitalization or treatment terminated, whichever is earlier, where temporary increase in compensation was authorized because of hospitalization for treatment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5505)

[26 FR 1596, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11889, Dec. 1, 1962; 29 FR 12368, Aug. 28, 1964; 29 FR 16329, Dec. 5, 1964; 35 FR 2828, Feb. 11, 1970; 37 FR 6679, Apr. 1, 1972; 38 FR 34115, Dec. 11, 1973; 41 FR 55874, Dec. 23, 1976; 44 FR 45941, Aug. 6, 1979; 48 FR 34473, July 29, 1983; 53 FR 23236, June 21, 1988; 56 FR 25045, June 3, 1991; 56 FR 65849, 65853, Dec. 19, 1991; 66 FR 48560, Sept. 21, 2001; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003; 83 FR 32738, July 13, 2018]

§ 3.502 Surviving spouses.

The effective date of discontinuance of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to

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or for a surviving spouse will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(a) *Additional allowance of dependency and indemnity compensation for children (38 U.S.C. 5112(b) § 3.5(e)(3)).* (1) If marriage occurred prior to October 1, 1982, the day preceding child's 18th birthday or last day of calendar year in which child's marriage occurred (see § 3.500(n) (2) and (3)), whichever is earlier.

(2) If marriage occurred on or after October 1, 1982, the day preceding child's 18th birthday or last day of the month in which marriage occurred (see § 3.500(n) (2) and (3)) whichever is earlier.

(b) *Pay grade; dependency and indemnity compensation (38 U.S.C. 1311(a), 5112(b)(10); Pub. L. 91-96, 83 Stat. 144).* Date of last payment when rate is reduced because of new certification of pay grade.

(c) *Legal surviving spouse entitled.* Date of last payment on award to another person as surviving spouse. See § 3.657.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(d) *Marriage.* See § 3.500(n).

(e) *Aid and attendance (§ 3.351(a)).* (1) Date of last payment, if need for aid and attendance has ceased.

(2) If hospitalized at Department of Veterans Affairs expense as a veteran, the date specified in § 3.552(b) (1) or (3).

(f) *Medicaid-covered nursing home care (§ 3.551(i)).* (1) Last day of the calendar month in which Medicaid payments begin, last day of the month following 60 days after issuance of a prereduction notice required under § 3.103(b)(2), or the earliest date on which payment may be reduced without creating an overpayment, whichever date is later; or

(2) If the surviving spouse willfully conceals information necessary to make the reduction, the last day of the

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month in which that willful concealment occurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

[26 FR 1596, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11890, Dec. 1, 1962; 33 FR 2995, Feb. 15, 1968; 35 FR 2828, Feb. 11, 1970; 37 FR 6679, Apr. 1, 1972; 41 FR 55874, Dec. 23, 1976; 48 FR 34473, July 29, 1983; 53 FR 23237, June 21, 1988; 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993]

§ 3.503 Children.

(a) The effective date of discontinuance of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to or for a child, or to or for a veteran or surviving spouse on behalf of such child, will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) *Age 18 (or 23) (38 U.S.C. 5112(a); § 3.57).* Day before 18th (or 23d birthday).

(2) *Enters service.* Date of last payment of apportioned disability benefits for child not in custody of estranged spouse. Full rate payable to veteran. No change where payments are being made for the child to the veteran, his (her) estranged spouse, his (her) surviving spouse, or to the fiduciary of a child not in the surviving spouse's custody.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) *Permanently incapable of selfsupport (38 U.S.C. 5112(a), (b)(6); Pub. L. 87-825; §§ 3.57, 3.950)—(i) Pension.* Date of last payment.

(ii) *Compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.* Last day of month following 60 days after notice to payee.

(4) *Marriage.* See § 3.500(n).

(5) *School attendance.* See § 3.667.

(6) *Stepchild no longer member of veteran's household (§ 3.57).* Last day child was a member of household.

(7) *Two parent cases (§ 3.703).* Day preceding beginning date of award based on service of the other parent.

(8) *Dependents' educational assistance (§§ 3.707, 3.807, and § 21.3023 of this chapter).* Day preceding beginning date of educational assistance allowance.

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(9) *Surviving spouse becomes entitled.* Date of last payment. See § 3.657.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(10) *Interlocutory adoption decree or adoptive placement agreement.* Date child left custody of adopting parent during the interlocutory period or during adoptive placement agreement, or date of rescission of the decree or date of termination of the adoptive placement agreement, whichever first occurs.

(b) *Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea.* The effective date of discontinuance of the monthly allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 will be the last day of the month before the month in which the death of the individual occurred.

(c) *Medicaid-covered nursing home care (§ 3.551(i)).* (1) Last day of the calendar month in which Medicaid payments begin, last day of the month following 60 days after issuance of a prereduction notice required under § 3.103(b)(2), or the earliest date on which payment may be reduced without creating an overpayment, whichever date is later; or

(2) If the child or the child's custodian willfully conceals information necessary to make the reduction, the last day of the month in which that willful concealment occurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1832, 5112(b))

[26 FR 1597, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11890, Dec. 1, 1962; 30 FR 14983, Dec. 3, 1965; 34 FR 839, Jan. 18, 1969; 38 FR 872, Jan. 5, 1973; 41 FR 55875, Dec. 23, 1976; 53 FR 23237, June 21, 1988; 62 FR 51279, Sept. 30, 1997; 67 FR 49587, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4248, Jan. 25, 2011; 83 FR 47275, Sept. 18, 2018]

§ 3.504 Parents; aid and attendance.

The effective date of discontinuance of an increased award because of the parent's need for aid and attendance will be the day of last payment if need for aid and attendance has ceased. If hospitalized at Department of Veterans Affairs expense as a veteran the date will be specified in § 3.552(b) (1) or (3).

(Authority: Pub. L. 92-197, 85 Stat. 660)

[37 FR 6679, Apr. 1, 1972]

§ 3.505 Filipino veterans and their survivors; benefits at the full-dollar rate.

The effective date of discontinuance of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation for a Filipino veteran or his or her survivor under § 3.42 will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(a) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is physically absent from the U.S. for a total of 183 days or more during any calendar year, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the 183rd day of absence from the U.S.

(b) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is physically absent from the U.S. for more than 60 consecutive days, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the 61st day of the absence.

(c) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 loses either U.S. citizenship or status as an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S., VA will reduce benefits to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the day he or she no longer satisfies one of these criteria.

(d) If mail to a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is returned to VA by the U.S. Postal Service, VA will make reasonable efforts to determine the correct mailing address. If VA is unable to determine the veteran's or survivor's correct address through reasonable efforts, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of \$0.50 for each dollar authorized under law, effective the first day of the month that follows the month for which VA last paid benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107)

[71 FR 8221, Feb. 16, 2006]

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HOSPITALIZATION ADJUSTMENTS

§ 3.551 Reduction because of hospitalization.

(a) *General.* Pension is subject to reduction as specified below when a veteran who has neither spouse, child nor dependent parent is hospitalized, unless the veteran is hospitalized for Hansen's disease. The provisions of this section apply to initial periods of hospitalization and to readmissions following discharge from a prior period of hospitalization. If the veteran is hospitalized for observation and examination, the date treatment began is considered the date of admission. Special rules governing discontinuance of aid and attendance allowance are contained in § 3.552. Except as otherwise indicated the terms "hospitalized" and "hospitalization" in §§ 3.551 through 3.556 mean:

(1) Hospital treatment in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or in any hospital at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(2) Institutional, domiciliary or nursing home care in a Department of Veterans Affairs institution or domiciliary or at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(b) *Old-law pension.* (1) Old law pension in excess of \$30 monthly for a veteran who has neither spouse, child nor dependent parent shall continue at the full monthly rate until the end of the sixth calendar month following the month of admission for hospitalization. The rate payable will be reduced effective the first of the seventh calendar month to \$30 monthly or 50 percent of the amount otherwise payable, whichever is greater. The reduced rate will be effective the first day of the seventh calendar month following admission. Payment of the amount withheld may be made on termination of hospitalization, as provided in § 3.556. (Sec. 306(b))

(2) *Readmission following regular discharge.* Where a veteran has been given an approved discharge or release, readmission the next day to the same or any other VA institution begins a new period of hospitalization, unless the veteran was released for purposes of admission to another VA institution.

(3) *Readmission following irregular discharge.* When a veteran whose award is subject to reduction under this paragraph has been discharged or released from a VA institution against medical advice or as a result of disciplinary action, reentry within 6 months from the date of previous admission constitutes a continuation of that period of hospitalization and the award will not be reduced prior to the first day of the seventh calendar month following the month of original admission, exclusive of authorized absences. Reentry 6 months or more after such discharge or release shall be considered a new admission.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(c) *Section 306 pension.* (1) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is being furnished hospital, nursing home or domiciliary care by the Department of Veterans Affairs, no pension in excess of \$50 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the second full calendar month following the month of admission for such care.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(2) No pension in excess of \$50 monthly shall be paid to or for a veteran having neither spouse nor child, or to a veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, for any period after the month in which the veteran is readmitted within 6 months of a period of care for which pension was reduced under paragraph (c) (1) of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(3) Where section 306 pension is being paid to a married veteran at a rate for a veteran without dependents all or any part of the monthly amount of pension withheld in excess of \$50 may be apportioned for a spouse as provided in § 3.454(b).

(d) *Improved pension prior to February 1, 1990.* (1) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and

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is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is being furnished domiciliary care by VA, no pension in excess of \$60 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the second full calendar month following the month of admission for such care. (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(2) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is furnished hospital or nursing home care by VA, no pension in excess of \$60 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the third full calendar month following the month of admission for such care. (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(3) No pension in excess of \$60 monthly shall be paid to or for a veteran having neither spouse nor child, or to a veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, for any period after the month in which the veteran is readmitted within 6 months of a period of care for which pension was reduced under paragraph (d)(1) or (2) of this section. (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(4) Where improved pension is being paid to a married veteran at the rate prescribed by 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) all or any part of the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) may be apportioned for a spouse as provided in §3.454(b). (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(5) The provisions of paragraphs (d) (1), (2), and (3) of this section are not applicable to any veteran who has a child, but is receiving pension as a veteran without a dependent because it is reasonable that some part of the child's estate be consumed for the child's maintenance under 38 U.S.C. 1522(b).

(6) For the purpose of paragraphs (d) (1), (2), and (3) of this section, if a veteran is furnished hospital or nursing home care by VA and then is transferred to VA-furnished domiciliary care, the period of hospital or nursing home care shall be considered as domiciliary care. Similarly, if a veteran is furnished domiciliary care by VA and then is transferred to VA-furnished hospital or nursing home care, the period of domiciliary care shall be considered hospital or nursing home care.

(e) *Improved pension after January 31, 1990.* (1) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is furnished domiciliary or nursing home care by VA, no pension in excess of \$90 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the third full calendar month following the month of admission for such care.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(2) No pension in excess of \$90 monthly shall be paid to a veteran having neither spouse nor child, or to a veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, for any period after the month in which the veteran is readmitted within six months of a period of domiciliary or nursing home care for which pension was reduced under paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

(3) Where improved pension is being paid to a married veteran at the rate prescribed by 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) all or any part of the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) may be apportioned for a spouse as provided in §3.454(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(4) For the purposes of paragraph (e)(1) of this section, if a veteran is furnished hospital care by VA and then is transferred to VA-furnished nursing home or domiciliary care, the period of hospital care shall not be considered as nursing home or domiciliary care. Transfers from VA-furnished nursing home or domiciliary care to VA-furnished hospital care then back to nursing home or domiciliary care shall be considered as continuous nursing home or domiciliary care provided the period of hospitalization does not exceed six months. Similarly, if a veteran is transferred from domiciliary or nursing home to a VA hospital and dies while so hospitalized, the entire period of VA care shall be considered as domiciliary or nursing home care. Nursing home or domiciliary care shall be considered as terminated effective the date of transfer to a VA hospital if the veteran is completely discharged from

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VA care following the period of hospitalization or if the period of hospitalization exceeds six months.

(5) Effective February 1, 1990, reductions of improved pension based on admissions or readmissions to VA hospitals or any hospital at VA expense shall no longer be made except when required under the provisions of 38 CFR 3.552.

(6) The provisions of paragraphs (e)(1) and (2) of this section are not applicable to any veteran who has a child, but is receiving pension as a veteran without a dependent because it is reasonable that some part of the child's estate be consumed for the child's maintenance under 38 U.S.C. 1522(b).

(f) *Computation of period.* For purposes of computing periods of hospitalization in paragraph (c) of this section, authorized absences of 96 hours or less will be included as periods of hospitalization, and those of over 96 hours excluded. Also, for purposes of that paragraph, periods of treatment or care of 60 total days will be considered two calendar months of hospitalization and periods of 90 total days considered three calendar months, exclusive of authorized absences in excess of 96 hours.

(g) *Proof of dependents.* The veteran will be considered to have neither spouse, child nor dependent parent in the absence of satisfactory proof. Statements contained in the claims folder concerning the existence of such dependents will be considered a prima facie showing. If the necessary evidence is not received: (1) Within 60 days after the date of request where the award is subject to reduction under paragraph (b) of this section, or (2) prior to the effective date of reduction under paragraph (c) of this section, the veteran's award will be reduced on the basis of no dependents. The full rate may be authorized from the date of reduction if the necessary evidence is received within 1 year after the date of request.

(h) *Hospitalization—(1) General.* The reduction required by paragraphs (d) and (e), except as they refer to domiciliary care, shall not be made for up to three additional calendar months after the last day of the third month referred to in paragraphs (d)(2) or (e)(1) of this section, or after the last day of the

month referred to in paragraphs (d)(3) or (e)(2) of this section, under the following conditions:

(i) The Chief Medical Director, or designee, certifies that the primary purpose for furnishing hospital or nursing home care during the additional period is to provide the veteran with a prescribed program of rehabilitation under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, designed to restore the veteran's ability to function within the veteran's family and community; and

(ii) The veteran is admitted to a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or nursing home after October 16, 1981.

(2) *Continued hospitalization for rehabilitation.* The reduction required by paragraph (d) or (e) of this section shall not be made for periods after the expiration of the additional period provided by paragraph (h)(1) of this section under the following conditions:

(i) The veteran remains hospitalized or in a nursing home after the expiration of the additional period provided by paragraph (h)(1) of this section; and

(ii) The Chief Medical Director, or designee, certifies that the primary purpose for furnishing continued hospital or nursing home care after the additional period provided by paragraph (h)(1) of this section is to provide the veteran with a program of rehabilitation under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, designed to restore the veteran's ability to function within the veteran's family and community.

(3) *Termination of hospitalization for rehabilitation.* Pension in excess of \$60 monthly or \$90, if reduction is under paragraph (e)(1) payable to a veteran under this paragraph shall be reduced the end of the calendar month in which the primary purpose of hospitalization or nursing home care is no longer to provide the veteran with a program of rehabilitation under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code designed to restore the veteran's ability to function within the veteran's family and community.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(i) *Certain beneficiaries receiving Medicaid-covered nursing home care.* This paragraph (i) applies to a veteran without a spouse or child, to a surviving

spouse without a child, and to a surviving child. Effective November 5, 1990, and terminating on the date provided in 38 U.S.C. 5503(d)(7), if such a beneficiary is receiving Medicaid-covered nursing home care, no pension or survivors pension in excess of \$90 per month will be paid to or for the beneficiary for any period after the month in which the Medicaid payments begin. A beneficiary is not liable for any pension paid in excess of the \$90 per month by reason of the Secretary's inability or failure to reduce payments, unless that inability or failure is the result of willful concealment, by the beneficiary, of information necessary to make that reduction.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

CROSS REFERENCES: Time limits. See § 3.109. Apportionment. See § 3.400(e). Reductions and discontinuances; general. See § 3.500. Incompetents; resumption. See § 3.558.

[27 FR 7677, Aug. 3, 1962]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 3.551, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 3.552 Adjustment of allowance for aid and attendance.

(a)(1) When a veteran who is already entitled to the aid and attendance allowance is hospitalized, the additional compensation or increased pension for aid and attendance shall be discontinued as provided in paragraph (b) of this section except as to disabilities specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section. (See paragraph (k) of this section for rules applicable to a veteran who establishes entitlement to the aid and attendance allowance on or after date of admission to hospitalization).

(2) The allowance for aid and attendance will be continued during hospitalization where the disability is paraplegia involving paralysis of both lower extremities together with loss of anal and bladder sphincter control, or Hansen's disease, except where discontinuance is required by paragraph (b)(2) of this section. In addition, in pension cases only, the aid and attendance allowance will be continued where the pensionable disability is blindness (visual acuity $\frac{5}{200}$ or less) or concentric contraction of visual field to 5 degrees

or less. Awards are, however, subject to the provisions of § 3.551 (except where the disabling condition is Hansen's disease).

(3) Additional compensation for dependents under § 3.4(b)(2) is payable during hospitalization in addition to the rates authorized by this section. The rates specified will also be increased by amounts authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) based on independently ratable disability, subject to the statutory ceiling on the total amount of compensation payable as set forth in § 3.350(a).

(b)(1) Where a veteran is admitted for hospitalization on or after October 1, 1964, the additional compensation or increased pension for aid and attendance will be discontinued effective the last day of the month following the month in which the veteran is admitted for hospitalization at the expense of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) When a veteran is hospitalized at the expense of the United States Government, the additional aid and attendance allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(1) or (2) or 38 U.S.C. 1114(t) will be discontinued effective the last day of the month following the month in which the veteran is admitted for hospitalization.

(3) Where a veteran affected by the provisions of paragraph (b) (1) and (2) or paragraph (k) of this section is discharged or released from the hospital against medical advice or as the result of disciplinary action, and is readmitted to such hospitalization within 6 months after that date, the allowance, additional compensation, or increased pension will be discontinued effective the day preceding the date of readmission. A readmission 6 months or more after such discharge or release will be considered as a new admission.

(c) Reduction will not be made where the same monthly rate of compensation would be payable without consideration of need for regular aid and attendance. This can only be determined after careful review of the current maximum entitlement without regard to any amount for aid and attendance.

(d) Where entitlement by reason of need for regular aid and attendance is the basis of the monthly rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(1) the award will be reduced

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to the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(s).

(e) Where a veteran is in receipt of section 306 pension, the aid and attendance allowance shall be reduced to the housebound rate of \$61 monthly (or \$76.25 if the veteran was age 78 or older on December 31, 1978). Where a veteran is in receipt of old-law pension, the total amount payable shall be reduced to \$100 monthly. Where a veteran is in receipt of improved pension, the applicable aid and attendance rate shall be reduced to the otherwise applicable rate under 38 U.S.C. 1521(e). No reduction shall be made, however, for any case involving the disabilities specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(f) Where entitlement to the rate in 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) is based in part on need for regular aid and attendance reduction because of being hospitalized will be to the rate payable for the other conditions shown.

(g) Where a veteran entitled to one of the rates under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l), (m), or (n) by reason of anatomical losses or losses of use of extremities, blindness (visual acuity 5/200 or less or light perception only), or anatomical loss of both eyes is being paid compensation at the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) because of entitlement to another rate under section 1114(l) on account of need for aid and attendance, the compensation will be reduced while hospitalized to the following:

(1) If entitlement is under section 1114(l) and in addition there is need for regular aid and attendance for another disability, the award during hospitalization will be at the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) since the disability requiring aid and attendance is 100 percent disabling.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(p))

(2) If entitlement is under section 1114(m), at the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(n).

(3) If entitlement is under section 1114(n), the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) would be continued, since the disability previously causing the need for regular aid and attendance would then be totally disabling entitling the veteran to the maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(p).

(h) If, because of blindness, a veteran requires regular aid and attendance, but has better vision than "light perception only" the award under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) will be reduced while hospitalized to the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(l).

(i) If the disability meets the aid and attendance requirements of 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) and the intermediate or next higher rate was assigned for disability independently ratable at 50 percent or 100 percent, the award based on such entitlement will be reduced because of hospitalization to the amount payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(s).

(j) The section 306 pension aid and attendance allowance authorized by § 3.252(f) is subject to reduction for hospitalization under the provisions of this section in the same manner as the regular section 306 pension aid and attendance allowance. The amount payable shall not be reduced to less than the housebound rate of \$61 monthly (or \$76.25 monthly if the veteran was age 78 or older on December 31, 1978).

(k)(1) This paragraph is applicable to hospitalized veterans who were not entitled to the aid and attendance allowance prior to hospital admission but who establish entitlement to it on or after the date of hospital admission.

(2) If the effective date of entitlement to the aid and attendance allowance is on or after the date of admission to hospitalization, the aid and attendance allowance shall not be paid until the date of discharge or release from hospitalization, unless the aid and attendance allowance is based on a disability specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section. If the aid and attendance allowance is based on a disability specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, the aid and attendance allowance shall be paid during hospitalization.

(3) If the aid and attendance allowance is not payable to a veteran under paragraph (k)(2) of this section, the veteran shall receive the appropriate reduced rate under paragraphs (d)

through (j) of this section while hospitalized.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(c))

[28 FR 1588, Feb. 20, 1963, as amended at 30 FR 14983, Dec. 3, 1965; 32 FR 13226, Sept. 19, 1967; 37 FR 19133, Sept. 19, 1972; 38 FR 34115, Dec. 11, 1973; 41 FR 55875, Dec. 23, 1976; 44 FR 22721, Apr. 17, 1979; 44 FR 45941, Aug. 6, 1979; 46 FR 31011, June 12, 1981; 46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003; 83 FR 20737, May 8, 2018]

§§ 3.553–3.555 [Reserved]

§ 3.556 Adjustment on discharge or release.

(a) *Temporary Absence—30 days.* (1) Where a competent veteran whose award was reduced under § 3.551(b) is placed on non-bed care status or other authorized absence of 30 days or more the full monthly rate, excluding any allowance for regular aid and attendance, will be restored effective the date of reduction. The full monthly rate for an incompetent veteran, or for a competent veteran whose pension was reduced under § 3.551(c), will be restored effective the date of departure from the hospital unless it is determined that apportionment for a spouse should be continued. In all instances, any allowance for regular aid and attendance will be restored effective the date of departure from the hospital.

(2) Upon the veteran's return to the hospital, an award which is subject to reduction under § 3.551 (b) or (c) will again be reduced effective the date of the veteran's return to the hospital. In all instances, any allowance for regular aid and attendance will be discontinued, if in order, effective the date of the veteran's return to the hospital.

(b) *Temporary absence—less than 30 days.* A temporary absence of less than 30 days, including the day of departure, will not require adjustment of the award. This applies to any approved absence. Any allowance for regular aid and attendance for such periods will be authorized after the veteran has been discharged from the hospital.

(c) *Adjustment based on need.* Where an award of pension was reduced under § 3.551(c), the full rate covering absences of less than 30 days may be restored, subject to prior payments, prior to discharge from hospitalization at

the request of the Director of the hospital, center or domiciliary, where this action is necessary to meet the veteran's financial needs, if the veteran has been hospitalized for more than 6 months and the periods of absence exceed a total of 30 days.

(d) *Irregular discharge.* When a competent veteran is given an irregular discharge, the full rate will be restored effective the date of release from the hospital. Payment of any amount withheld under § 3.551(b) will not be authorized until the expiration of 6 months after termination of hospitalization unless the prior release is changed to a regular release. However, amounts not paid under paragraph (c) of this section covering absence of less than 30 days where the award was reduced under § 3.551(c) will be authorized immediately.

(e) *Regular discharge.* When a veteran, either competent or incompetent, is given a regular discharge or release, the full rate, including any allowance for regular aid and attendance will be restored effective the date of release from the hospital, subject to prior payments. The award will be based on the most recent rating and, where the award was reduced under § 3.551(b), will include, in the case of a competent veteran, any amounts withheld because of hospitalization. The amount withheld for an incompetent veteran will not be authorized until the expiration of 6 months following a rating of competency by VA. Any institutional award will be discontinued effective date of last payment, as provided in § 3.501(j). Where an apportionment made under § 3.551(c) is not continued, the apportionment will be discontinued effective the day preceding the date of the veteran's release from the hospital, or, if adjusted, effective the date of the veteran's release from the hospital, unless an overpayment would result. In the excepted cases, the awards to the veteran and apportionee will be adjusted as of date of last payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

(f) *Types of discharges.* A discharge is considered regular if it is granted because of having received maximum

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hospital benefits. A discharge for disciplinary reasons or because of the patient's refusal to accept, neglect of or obstruction of treatment; refusal to accept transfer, or failure to return from authorized absence, is considered irregular.

[27 FR 7678, Aug. 3, 1962, as amended at 27 FR 8794, Sept. 1, 1962; 38 FR 34115, Dec. 11, 1973; 39 FR 34532, Sept. 26, 1974; 40 FR 45169, Oct. 1, 1975; 44 FR 22721, Apr. 17, 1979; 44 FR 45942, Aug. 6, 1979; 50 FR 50616, Dec. 11, 1985]

§ 3.557 [Reserved]

§ 3.558 Resumption and payment of withheld benefits; incompetents with estates that equaled or exceeded statutory limit.

(a) Payments for the veteran will be resumed and apportionment awards discontinued under the applicable provisions of § 3.556(a), (d), and (e) upon authorized absence from the hospital for 30 days or more or a regular or irregular discharge or release. Care and maintenance payments to an institution will not be made for any period the veteran is not receiving such care and maintenance.

(b) Any amount not paid because of the provisions of former § 3.557(b) (as in effect prior to December 27, 2001), and any amount of compensation or retirement pay withheld pursuant to the provisions of § 3.551(b) (and/or predecessor regulatory provisions) as it was constituted prior to August 1, 1972, and not previously paid because of the provisions of former § 3.557(b) (as in effect prior to December 27, 2001), will be awarded to the veteran if he or she is subsequently rated competent by VA for a period of not less than six months.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

[27 FR 7679, Aug. 3, 1962, as amended at 36 FR 25225, Dec. 30, 1971; 38 FR 34116, Dec. 11, 1973; 40 FR 45170, Oct. 1, 1975; 41 FR 18412, May 4, 1976; 50 FR 50617, Dec. 11, 1985; 58 FR 34224, June 24, 1993; 66 FR 48560, Sept. 21, 2001; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.559 [Reserved]

ADJUSTMENTS AND RESUMPTIONS

§ 3.650 Rate for additional dependent.

(a) *Running awards.* Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section

where a claim is filed by an additional dependent who has apparent entitlement which, if established, would require reduction of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation being paid to another dependent, payments to the person or persons on the rolls will be reduced as follows:

(1) Where benefits would be payable from a date prior to the date of filing claim, the reduction will be effective from the date of potential entitlement of the additional dependent.

(2) Where benefits would be payable from the date of filing claim, the reduction will be effective the date of receipt of the claim by the additional dependent, or date of last payment, whichever is later.

If entitlement of the additional dependent is not established, benefits previously being paid will be resumed, if otherwise in order, commencing the day following the effective date of reduction.

(b) *New awards.* If the additional dependent is found to be entitled, the full rate payable will be authorized effective the date of entitlement.

(c) *Retroactive DIC award to a school child—(1) General.* If DIC (dependency and indemnity compensation) is being currently paid to a veteran's child or children under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a), and DIC is retroactively awarded to an additional child of the veteran based on school attendance, the full rate payable to the additional child shall be awarded the first of the month following the month in which the award to the additional child is approved. The rate payable under the current award shall be reduced effective the date the full rate is awarded to the additional child. The rate payable to the additional child for periods prior to the date the full rate is awarded shall be the difference between the rate payable for all the children and the rate that was payable before the additional child established entitlement.

(2) *Applicability.* The provisions of paragraph (c)(1) of this section are applicable only when the following conditions are met:

(i) The additional child was receiving DIC under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a) prior to attaining age 18; and

(ii) DIC for the additional child was discontinued on or after attainment of age 18; and

(iii) After DIC has been discontinued, the additional child reestablishes entitlement to DIC under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a) based on attendance at an approved school and the effective date of entitlement is prior to the date the Department of Veterans Affairs receives the additional child's claim to reestablish entitlement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1313(b))

(3) *Effective date.* This paragraph is applicable to DIC paid after September 30, 1981. If DIC is retroactively awarded for a period prior to October 1, 1981, payment for the period prior to October 1, 1981 shall be made under paragraph (a) of this section and payment for the period after September 30, 1981, shall be made under this paragraph.

[29 FR 9564, July 15, 1964, as amended at 47 FR 24551, June 7, 1982]

§ 3.651 Change in status of dependents.

Except as otherwise provided:

(a) A payee who becomes entitled to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or to a greater rate because payment of that benefit to another payee has been reduced or discontinued will be awarded the benefit or increased benefit without the filing of a new claim.

(b) The commencement or adjustment will be effective the day following the reduction or discontinuance of the award to the other payee if the necessary evidence is received in the Department of Veterans Affairs within 1 year from the date of request therefor; otherwise from the date of receipt of a new claim.

(c) The rate for the persons entitled will be the rate that would have been payable if they had been the only original persons entitled.

[26 FR 1598, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended 27 FR 11890, Dec. 1, 1962; 30 FR 133, Jan. 7, 1965]

§ 3.652 Periodic certification of continued eligibility.

Except as otherwise provided:

(a) Individuals to whom benefits are being paid are required to certify, when requested, that any or all of the eligi-

bility factors which established entitlement to the benefit being paid continue to exist. The beneficiary will be advised at the time of the request that the certification must be furnished within 60 days from the date of the request therefor and that failure to do so will result in the reduction or termination of benefits.

(1) If the certification is not received within 60 days from the date of the request, the eligibility factor(s) for which certification was requested will be considered to have ceased to exist as of the end of the month in which it was last shown by the evidence of record to have existed. For purposes of this paragraph, the effective date of reduction or termination of benefits will be in accordance with §§ 3.500 through 3.504 as in effect on the date the eligibility factor(s) is considered to have ceased to exist. The claimant will be advised of the proposed reduction or termination of benefits and the date the proposed action will be effective. An additional 60 days from the date of notice of the proposed action will be provided for the claimant to respond.

(2) If the certification is not received within the additional 60 day period, the proposed reduction or termination of benefits will be put into effect.

(b) When the required certification is received, benefits will be adjusted, if necessary, in accordance with the facts found.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Employment Questionnaire, failure to return. See § 3.501(f). Income and Net Worth Questionnaires. See § 3.661.

[52 FR 43063, Nov. 9, 1987]

§ 3.653 Foreign residence.

(a) *General.* Pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable to an alien who is located in the territory of or under the control of an enemy of the United States or of its allies. The benefit may, however, be paid to the dependents of such alien, but not in excess of the amount which would be payable to the dependent if the alien were dead.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5308)

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(b) *Retroactive payments.* Any amount not paid to an alien under this section, together with any amounts placed to the alien's credit in the special deposit account in the Treasury or covered into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts under 31 U.S.C. 123-128 will be paid to him or her on the filing of a new claim. Such claim should be supported with evidence that the alien has not been guilty of mutiny, treason, sabotage or rendering assistance to an enemy, as provided in § 3.902(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5309)

(c) *Treasury Department list.* This paragraph is applicable to claims for benefits for aliens residing in countries identified on the list established by the Secretary of the Treasury as countries to which checks could not be delivered with reasonable assurance that the payee would actually receive and be able to negotiate a check for full value.

(1) *Evidence requests.* Requests for evidence to establish either basic or continued entitlement will not be made where such evidence would be obtained from a country on the Treasury Department list unless the claimant requests that checks be sent to him or her in care of a U.S. Foreign Service post in a country which is not on the list.

(2) *Awards.* Payments for a claimant residing in a country included in the Treasury Department list will not be authorized unless the claimant requests that checks be sent to him or her in care of a U.S. Foreign Service post in a country which is not on the list.

(3) *Retroactive payments.* Where award action is authorized under paragraph (c)(2) of this section, or a new claim has been filed after a country has been removed from the Treasury Department list, all benefits to which the payee is otherwise entitled will be paid as provided in paragraph (b) of this section. There is no time limit for filing claim.

(d) *Germany and Japan.* Where payments were discontinued before July 1, 1954, because the payee was a citizen or subject of Germany or Japan, no pay-

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ments will be made for any period prior to the date of filing a new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5309(b))

[26 FR 1599, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 31 FR 13172, Oct. 12, 1966; 47 FR 24551, June 7, 1982]

§ 3.654 Active service pay.

(a) *General.* Pension, compensation, or retirement pay will be discontinued under the circumstances stated in § 3.700(a)(1) for any period for which the veteran received active service pay. For the purposes of this section, active service pay means pay received for active duty, active duty for training or inactive duty training.

(b) *Active duty.* (1) Where the veteran returns to active duty status, the award will be discontinued effective the day preceding reentrance into active duty status. If the exact date is not known, payments will be discontinued effective date of last payment and as of the correct date when the date of reentrance has been ascertained from the service department.

(2) Payments, if otherwise in order, will be resumed effective the day following release from active duty if claim for recommencement of payments is received within 1 year from the date of such release; otherwise payments will be resumed effective 1 year prior to the date of receipt of a new claim. Prior determinations of service connection will not be disturbed except as provided in § 3.105. Compensation will be authorized based on the degree of disability found to exist at the time the award is resumed. Disability will be evaluated on the basis of all facts, including records from the service department relating to the most recent period of active service. If a disability is incurred or aggravated in the second period of service, compensation for that disability cannot be paid unless a claim therefor is filed.

(c) *Training duty.* Prospective adjustment of awards may be made where the veteran waives his or her Department of Veterans Affairs benefit covering anticipated receipt of active service pay because of expected periods of active duty for training or inactive duty training. Where readjustment is in

order because service pay was not received for expected training duty, retroactive payments may be authorized if a claim for readjustment is received within 1 year after the end of the fiscal year for which payments were waived.

[27 FR 11890, Dec. 1, 1962]

§ 3.655 Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination.

(a) *General.* When entitlement or continued entitlement to a benefit cannot be established or confirmed without a current VA examination or reexamination and a claimant, without good cause, fails to report for such examination, or reexamination, action shall be taken in accordance with paragraph (b) or (c) of this section as appropriate. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, the illness or hospitalization of the claimant, death of an immediate family member, etc. For purposes of this section, the terms *examination* and *reexamination* include periods of hospital observation when required by VA.

(b) *Original or supplemental claim, or claim for increase.* When a claimant fails to report for an examination scheduled in conjunction with an original compensation claim, the claim shall be rated based on the evidence of record. When the examination was scheduled in conjunction with any other original claim, a supplemental claim for a benefit which was previously disallowed, or a claim for increase, the claim shall be denied.

(c) *Running award.* (1) When a claimant fails to report for a reexamination and the issue is continuing entitlement, VA shall issue a pretermination notice advising the payee that payment for the disability or disabilities for which the reexamination was scheduled will be discontinued or, if a minimum evaluation is established in part 4 of this title or there is an evaluation protected under § 3.951(b) of this part, reduced to the lower evaluation. Such notice shall also include the prospective date of discontinuance or reduction, the reason therefor and a statement of the claimant's procedural and appellate rights. The claimant shall be allowed 60 days to indicate his or her willingness to report for a reexamina-

tion or to present evidence that payment for the disability or disabilities for which the reexamination was scheduled should not be discontinued or reduced.

(2) If there is no response within 60 days, or if the evidence submitted does not establish continued entitlement, payment for such disability or disabilities shall be discontinued or reduced as of the date indicated in the pretermination notice or the date of last payment, whichever is later.

(3) If notice is received that the claimant is willing to report for a reexamination before payment has been discontinued or reduced, action to adjust payment shall be deferred. The reexamination shall be rescheduled and the claimant notified that failure to report for the rescheduled examination shall be cause for immediate discontinuance or reduction of payment. When a claimant fails to report for such rescheduled examination, payment shall be reduced or discontinued as of the date of last payment and shall not be further adjusted until a VA examination has been conducted and the report reviewed.

(4) If within 30 days of a pretermination notice issued under paragraph (c)(1) of this section the claimant requests a hearing, action to adjust payment shall be deferred as set forth in § 3.105(i)(1) of this part. If a hearing is requested more than 30 days after such pretermination notice but before the proposed date of discontinuance or reduction, a hearing shall be scheduled, but payment shall nevertheless be discontinued or reduced as of the date proposed in the pretermination notice or date of last payment, whichever is later, unless information is presented which warrants a different determination. When the claimant has also expressed willingness to report for an examination, however, the provisions of paragraph (c)(3) of this section shall apply.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Procedural due process and appellate rights: See § 3.103. Examinations: See § 3.326. Reexaminations: See § 3.327.

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Resumption of rating when veteran subsequently reports for VA examination: See § 3.330.

[55 FR 49521, Nov. 29, 1990; 58 FR 46865, Sept. 3, 1993; 80 FR 18117, Apr. 3, 2015; 84 FR 171, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.656 Disappearance of veteran.

(a) When any veteran has disappeared for 90 days or more and his or her whereabouts remain unknown to the members of his or her family and the Department of Veterans Affairs, disability compensation which he or she was receiving or entitled to receive may be paid to or for his or her spouse, children and parents, effective the day following the date of last payment to the veteran if a claim is received within 1 year after that date; otherwise from the date of receipt of a claim. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(1) Dependency and indemnity compensation.

(2) Amount of compensation payable to the veteran at the time of disappearance, subject to authorized insurance deductions.

(b) Where a veteran's whereabouts become known to the Department of Veterans Affairs after an award to dependents has been made as provided in this section, the award to the dependents will be discontinued effective date of last payment, and appropriate action will be taken to adjust the veteran's award in accordance with the facts found.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1158)

(c) Awards to dependents will not be continued under this section in any case where the facts are such as to bring into effect the presumption of death under § 3.212.

(d) When any veteran has disappeared for 90 days or more and the veteran's whereabouts remain unknown to members of the veteran's family and the Department of Veterans Affairs, any improved pension, section 306 or service pension which the veteran was receiving or entitled to receive may be paid to or for the spouse or children. The status of the veteran at the time of disappearance, with respect to permanent and total disability, income and net worth will be presumed to continue un-

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changed. Payment for the spouse or children will be effective the day following the date of last payment to the veteran if a claim is received within 1 year after that date; otherwise from date of receipt of a claim. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(1) The service death pension rate if the veteran was receiving service pension or the improved death pension rate if the veteran was receiving section 306 or improved pension.

(2) The amount of pension payable to the veteran at the time of disappearance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1507)

[26 FR 1599, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11891, Dec. 1, 1962; 30 FR 6649, May 14, 1965; 40 FR 14313, Mar. 31, 1975; 44 FR 45942, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.657 Surviving spouse becomes entitled, or entitlement terminates.

Where a surviving spouse establishes entitlement to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, an award to another person as surviving spouse, or for a child or children as if there were no surviving spouse will be discontinued or adjusted as provided in this section.

(a) *Surviving spouse's awards.* For periods on or after December 1, 1962, where a legal surviving spouse establishes entitlement after payments have been made to another person as surviving spouse, the full rate payable to the legal surviving spouse will be authorized effective the date of entitlement. Payments to the former payee will be discontinued as follows:

(1) Where benefits are payable to the legal surviving spouse from a date prior to the date of filing claim, the award to the former payee will be terminated the day preceding the effective date of the award to the legal surviving spouse.

(2) Where benefits are payable to the legal surviving spouse from the date of filing claim, the award to the former payee will be terminated effective the date of receipt of the claim or date of last payment, whichever is later.

(b) *Children's awards.* (1) Where a surviving spouse establishes entitlement and:

(i) Payments were being made for a child or children at a lower monthly rate than that provided where there is a surviving spouse, the award to the surviving spouse will be effective the date provided by the applicable law, and will be the difference between the rate paid for the children and the rate payable for the surviving spouse and children. The full rate will be payable for the surviving spouse effective the day following the date of last payment for the children;

(ii) Payments were being made for a child or children at the same or higher monthly rate than that provided where there is a surviving spouse, the award to the surviving spouse will be effective the day following the date of last payment on the awards on behalf of the children.

(2) Where a surviving spouse has received benefits after entitlement was terminated and,

(i) The child or children were entitled to a lower monthly rate, the award to the surviving spouse will be amended to authorize payment at the rate provided for the children as if there were no surviving spouse, covering the period from the date the surviving spouse's entitlement terminated to the date of last payment. The award for the child or children will be made effective the following day.

(ii) The child or children were entitled to a higher monthly rate, the award to the surviving spouse will be discontinued effective date of last payment. The award to the children will be effective the day following the date the surviving spouse's entitlement terminated and will be the difference between the rate payable for the children and the rate paid on the surviving spouse's award. The full rate will be payable for the children effective the day following the date of last payment to the surviving spouse.

[39 FR 20204, June 7, 1974, as amended at 44 FR 45942, Aug. 6, 1979]

§3.658 Offsets; dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) When an award of dependency and indemnity compensation is made covering a period for which death compensation or benefits under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act, based

on military service, have been paid to the same payee based on the same death, the award of dependency and indemnity compensation will be made subject to an offset of payments of death compensation or benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act over the same period.

(b) When an award of dependency and indemnity compensation is made covering a period for which death benefits have been paid to the same payee based on the death of another spouse the award will be made subject to an offset of payments of death pension or compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation over the same period in the case of the other spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d)(2), 5304(b)(3))

[41 FR 17387, Apr. 26, 1976]

§3.659 Two parents in same parental line.

The provisions of this section are applicable for periods commencing on or after January 1, 1957 in cases involving payments of death compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, and in addition, for periods commencing on or after June 9, 1960, in cases involving payments of death pension based on death on or after that date.

(a) If death pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation is payable based on the service of one parent, an award of such benefits to or on account of a child will be made subject to any payments of these benefits made to or on account of that child over the same period of time based on the service of another parent in the same parental line.

(b) Any reduction or discontinuance of an award to the child or to a surviving spouse will be effective the day preceding the commencing date of death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or, under the circumstances described in §3.707, the commencing date of dependents' educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35, to or on account of the child based on the service of another parent in the same parental line. Any increase to a surviving spouse or another child will be effective the commencing date of the award to the child.

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CROSS REFERENCE: Two-parent cases. See § 3.503(a)(7). Two parents in same parental line. See § 3.703.

[27 FR 4917, May 25, 1962, as amended at 29 FR 9564, July 15, 1964; 41 FR 17387, Apr. 26, 1976]

§ 3.660 Dependency, income and estate.

(a) *Reduction or discontinuance*—(1) *General.* A veteran, surviving spouse or child who is receiving pension, or a parent who is receiving compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation must notify the Department of Veterans Affairs of any material change or expected change in his or her income or other circumstances which would affect his or her entitlement to receive, or the rate of, the benefit being paid. Such notice must be furnished when the recipient acquires knowledge that he or she will begin to receive additional income or when his or her marital or dependency status changes. In pension claims subject to § 3.252(b) or § 3.274 and in compensation claims subject to § 3.250(a)(2), notice must be furnished of any material increase in corpus of the estate or net worth.

(2) *Effective dates.* Where reduction or discontinuance of a running award of section 306 pension or old-law pension is required because dependency of another person ceased due to marriage, annulment, divorce or death, or because of an increase in income, which increase could not reasonably have been anticipated based on the amount actually received from that source the year before, the reduction or discontinuance shall be made effective the end of the year in which the increase occurred. Where reduction or discontinuance of a running award of improved pension or dependency and indemnity compensation is required because of an increase in income, the reduction or discontinuance shall be made effective the end of the month in which the increase occurred. Where reduction or discontinuance of a running award of any benefit is required because of an increase in net worth or corpus of estate, because dependency of a parent ceased, or because dependency of another person ceased prior to October 1, 1982, due to marriage, annul-

ment, divorce, or death, the award shall be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the calendar year in which the increase occurred or dependency ceased. Except as noted in this subparagraph for section 306 or old-law pension, where the dependency of another person ceased on or after October 1, 1982, due to marriage, annulment, divorce or death, the reduction or discontinuance shall be effective the last day of the month in which dependency ceased.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b))

(3) *Overpayments.* Overpayments created by retroactive discontinuance of benefits will be subject to recovery if not waived. Where dependency and indemnity compensation was being paid to two parents living together, an overpayment will be established on the award to each parent.

(b) *Award or increase; income.* Where pension or dependency and indemnity compensation was not paid for a particular 12-month annualization period because the claim was disallowed, an award was deferred under § 3.260(b) or § 3.271(f), payments were discontinued or made at a lower rate based on anticipated or actual income, benefits otherwise payable may be authorized commencing the first of a 12-month annualization period as provided in this paragraph. In all other cases, benefits may not be authorized for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

(1) *Anticipated income.* Where payments were not made or were made at a lower rate because of anticipated income, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation may be awarded or increased in accordance with the facts found but not earlier than the beginning of the appropriate 12-month annualization period if satisfactory evidence is received within the same or the next calendar year.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(h))

(2) *Actual income.* Where the claimant's actual income did not permit payment, or payment was made at a lower rate, for a given 12-month annualization period, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation may be awarded or increased, effective

the beginning of the next 12-month annualization period, if satisfactory evidence is received within that period.

(c) *Increases; change in status.* Where there is change in the payee's marital status or status of dependents which would permit payment at a higher rate and the change in status is by reason of the claimant's marriage or birth or adoption of a child, the effective date of the increase will be the date of the event if the required evidence is received within 1 year of the event. Where there is a change in dependency status for any reason other than marriage, or the birth or adoption of a child, which would permit payment at a higher rate, the increased rate will be effective the date of receipt of a claim or an intent to file a claim as set forth in §3.155(b) if the required evidence is received within 1 year of Department of Veterans Affairs request. The rate payable for each period will be determined, as provided in §§3.260(f) or 3.273(c). (See §3.651 as to increase due to termination of payments to another payee. Also see §3.667 as to increase based on school attendance.)

(d) *Corpus of estate; net worth.* Where a claim has been finally disallowed or terminated because of the corpus of estate and net worth provisions of §3.263 and entitlement is established on the basis of a reduction in estate or net worth, or a change in circumstances such as health, acquisition of a dependent, or increased rate of depletion of the estate, benefits or increased benefits will not be paid for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

[30 FR 3354, Mar. 12, 1965, as amended at 44 FR 45942, Aug. 6, 1979; 48 FR 34473, July 29, 1983; 57 FR 59300, Dec. 15, 1992; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014; 83 FR 47275, Sept. 18, 2018]

§3.661 Eligibility Verification Reports.

(a) *Determination and entitlement.* (1) Where the report shows a change in income, net worth, marital status, status of dependents or change in circumstances affecting the application of the net worth provisions, the award will be adjusted in accordance with §3.660(a)(2).

(2) Where there is doubt as to the extent of anticipated income payment of pension or dependency and indemnity

compensation will be authorized at the lowest appropriate rate or will be withheld, as provided in §3.260(b) or §3.271(f).

(b) *Failure to return report*—(1) *Section 306 and old-law pension*—(i) *Discontinuance.* Discontinuance of old-law or section 306 pension shall be effective the last day of the calendar year for which income (and net worth in a section 306 pension case) was to be reported.

(ii) *Resumption of benefits.* Payment of old-law or section 306 pension may be resumed, if otherwise in order, from the date of last payment if evidence of entitlement is received within the calendar year following the calendar year for which income (and net worth in a section 306 pension case) was to be reported; otherwise pension may not be paid for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

(2) *Improved pension and dependency and indemnity compensation*—(i) *Discontinuance.* Discontinuance of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) or improved pension shall be effective the first day of the 12-month annualization period for which income (and net worth in an improved pension case) was to be reported or the effective date of the award, whichever is the later date.

(ii) *Adjustment of overpayment.* If evidence of entitlement to improved pension or DIC for any period for which payment of improved pension or DIC was discontinued for failure to file an Eligibility Verification Report is received at any time, payment of improved pension or DIC shall be awarded for the period of entitlement for which benefits were discontinued for failure to file an Eligibility Verification Report.

(iii) *Resumption of benefits.* Payment of improved pension and DIC may be resumed, if otherwise in order, from the date of last payment if evidence of entitlement is received within the 12-month annualization period following the 12-month annualization period for which income (and net worth in an improved pension case) was to be reported; otherwise pension or DIC may

not be paid for any period prior to receipt of a new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[30 FR 3355, Mar. 12, 1965, as amended at 44 FR 45942, Aug. 6, 1979; 46 FR 55098, Nov. 6, 1981; 57 FR 59300, Dec. 15, 1992]

§§ 3.662–3.664 [Reserved]

§ 3.665 Incarcerated beneficiaries and fugitive felons—compensation.

(a) *General.* Any person specified in paragraph (c) of this section who is incarcerated in a Federal, State or local penal institution in excess of 60 days for conviction of a felony will not be paid compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) in excess of the amount specified in paragraph (d) of this section beginning on the 61st day of incarceration. VA will inform a person whose benefits are subject to this reduction of the rights of the person's dependents to an apportionment while the person is incarcerated, and the conditions under which payments to the person may be resumed upon release from incarceration. In addition, VA will also notify the person's dependents of their right to an apportionment if the VA is aware of their existence and can obtain their addresses. However, no apportionment will be made if the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon as defined in paragraph (n) of this section.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section the term *compensation* includes disability compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1151. The term *dependency and indemnity compensation* (DIC) includes death compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1121 or 1141, death compensation and DIC payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151, and any benefit payable under chapter 13 of title 38, United States Code. The term *release from incarceration* includes participation in a work release or halfway house program, parole, and completion of sentence. For purposes of this section, a felony is any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year, unless specifically categorized as a misdemeanor under the law of the prosecuting jurisdiction.

(c) *Applicability.* The provisions of paragraph (a) of this section are applicable to the following persons:

(1) A person serving a period of incarceration for conviction of a felony committed after October 7, 1980.

(2) A person serving a period of incarceration after September 30, 1980 (regardless of when the felony was committed) when the following conditions are met:

(i) The person was incarcerated on October 1, 1980; and

(ii) An award of compensation or DIC is approved after September 30, 1980.

(3) A veteran who, on October 7, 1980, was incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for a felony committed before that date, and who remains so incarcerated for a conviction of that felony as of December 27, 2001.

(d) *Amount payable during incarceration—(1) Veteran rated 20 percent or more.* A veteran to whom the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section apply with a service-connected disability evaluation of 20 percent or more shall receive the rate of compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a).

(2) *Veteran rated less than 20 percent.* A veteran to whom the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section apply with a service-connected disability evaluation of less than 20 percent (even though the rate for 38 U.S.C. 1114 (k) or (q) is paid) shall receive one-half the rate of compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a).

(3) *Surviving spouse, parent or child.* A surviving spouse, parent, or child, beneficiary to whom the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section apply shall receive one-half the rate of compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a).

(e) *Apportionment—(1) Compensation.* All or part of the compensation not paid to an incarcerated veteran may be apportioned to the veteran's spouse, child or children and dependent parents on the basis of individual need. In determining individual need consideration shall be given to such factors as the apportionee claimant's income and living expenses, the amount of compensation available to be apportioned, the needs and living expenses of other apportionee claimants as well as any special needs, if any, of all apportionee claimants.

(2) *DIC*. All or part of the DIC not paid to an incarcerated surviving spouse or other children not in the surviving spouse's custody may be apportioned to another child or children. All or part of the DIC not paid to an incarcerated child may be apportioned to the surviving spouse or other children. These apportionments shall be made on the basis of individual need giving consideration to the factors set forth in paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

(f) *Effective dates*. An apportionment under this section shall be effective the date of reduction of payments made to the incarcerated person, subject to payments to the incarcerated person over the same period, if a claim or intent to file a claim as set forth in § 3.155(b) is received within 1 year after notice to the incarcerated person as required by paragraph (a) of this section, and any necessary evidence is received within 1 year from the date of request by the Department of Veterans Affairs; otherwise, payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim or intent to file a claim as set forth in § 3.155(b).

(g) *Incarcerated dependent*. No apportionment may be made to or on behalf of any person who is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony.

(h) *Notice to dependent for whom apportionment granted*. A dependent for whom an apportionment is granted under this section shall be informed that the apportionment is subject to immediate discontinuance upon the incarcerated person's release or participation in a work release or halfway house program. A dependent shall also be informed that if the dependent and the incarcerated person do not live together when the incarcerated person is released (or participates in a work release or halfway house program) the dependent may submit a new claim for apportionment.

(i) *Resumption upon release*—(1) *No apportionment or family reunited*. If there was no apportionment at the time of release from incarceration, or if the released person is reunited with all dependents for whom an apportionment was granted, the released person's award shall be resumed the date of release from incarceration if the Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs receives notice of release within 1 year following release; otherwise the award shall be resumed the date of receipt of notice of release. If there was an apportionment award during incarceration, it shall be discontinued date of last payment to the apportionee upon receipt of notice of release of the incarcerated person. Payment to the released person shall then be resumed at the full rate from date of last payment to the apportionee. Payment to the released person from date of release to date of last payment to the apportionee shall be made at the rate which is the difference between the released person's full rate and the sum of (i) the rate that was payable to the apportionee and (ii) the rate payable during incarceration.

(2) *Apportionment granted and family not reunited*. If there was an apportionment granted during incarceration and the released person is not reunited with all dependents for whom an apportionment was granted, the released person's award shall be resumed as stated in paragraph (i)(1) of this section except that when the released person's award is resumed it shall not include any additional amount payable by reason of a dependent(s) not reunited with the released person. The award to this dependent(s) will then be reduced to the additional amount payable for the dependent(s).

(3) *Apportionment to a dependent parent*. An apportionment made to a dependent parent under this section cannot be continued beyond the veteran's release from incarceration unless the veteran is incompetent and the provisions of § 3.452(c) (1) and (2) are for application. When a competent veteran is released from incarceration an apportionment made to a dependent parent shall be discontinued and the veteran's award resumed as provided in paragraph (i)(1) of this section.

(j) *Increased compensation during incarceration*—(1) *General*. The amount of any increased compensation awarded to an incarcerated veteran that results from other than a statutory rate increase may be subject to reduction due to incarceration. This applies to a veteran whose compensation is subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c)

of this section prior to approval of an award of increased compensation as well as to veteran whose compensation is not subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section prior to approval of an award of increased compensation.

(2) *Veteran subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section.* If prior to approval of an award of increased compensation the veteran's compensation was reduced under the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section, the amount of the increase shall be reduced as follows if the veteran remains incarcerated:

(i) If the veteran's schedular evaluation is increased from 10 percent to 20 percent or greater, the amount payable to the veteran shall be increased from one-half the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a) to the rate payable under section 1114(a).

(ii) If the veteran's schedular evaluation was 20 percent or more, none of the increased compensation shall be paid to the veteran while the veteran remains incarcerated.

(3) *Veteran's compensation not subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section prior to award of increased compensation.* If prior to the approval of an award of increased compensation the veteran is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony and the veteran's compensation was not reduced under the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section, none of the increased compensation shall be paid to the veteran for periods after October 7, 1980, subject to the following conditions:

(i) The veteran remains incarcerated after October 7, 1980 in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony; and

(ii) The award of increased compensation is approved after October 7, 1980. If the effective date of the increase is prior to October 8, 1980, the amount payable for periods prior to October 8, 1980, shall not be reduced.

(4) *Apportionments.* The amount of any increased compensation reduced under this paragraph may be apportioned as provided in paragraph (e) of this section.

(k) *Retroactive awards.* Whenever compensation or DIC is awarded to an incarcerated person any amounts due for periods prior to date of reduction under this section shall be paid to the incarcerated person.

(l) *DIC parents.* If two parents are both entitled to DIC and were living together prior to the time of the DIC payable to one parent was reduced due to incarceration, they shall be considered as two parents not living together for the purpose of determining entitlement to DIC.

(m) *Conviction overturned on appeal.* If a conviction is overturned on appeal, any compensation or DIC withheld under this section as a result of incarceration for such conviction (less the amount of any apportionment) shall be restored to the beneficiary.

(n) *Fugitive felons.* (1) Compensation is not payable on behalf of a veteran for any period during which he or she is a fugitive felon. Compensation or DIC is not payable on behalf of a dependent of a veteran for any period during which the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon.

(2) For purposes of this section, the term *fugitive felon* means a person who is a fugitive by reason of:

(i) Fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for an offense, or an attempt to commit an offense, which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the person flees; or

(ii) Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed for commission of a felony under Federal or State law.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (n) of this section, the term *felony* includes a high misdemeanor under the laws of a State which characterizes as high misdemeanors offenses that would be felony offenses under Federal law.

(4) For purposes of paragraph (n) of this section, the term *dependent* means a spouse, surviving spouse, child, or dependent parent of a veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5313, 5313B; Sec. 506, Pub. L. 107-103, 115 Stat. 996-997)

[46 FR 47542, Sept. 29, 1981, as amended at 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014]

§ 3.666 Incarcerated beneficiaries and fugitive felons—pension.

If any individual to or for whom pension is being paid under a public or private law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs is imprisoned in a Federal, State or local penal institution as the result of conviction of a felony or misdemeanor, such pension payments will be discontinued effective on the 61st day of imprisonment following conviction. The payee will be informed of his or her rights and the rights of dependents to payments while he or she is imprisoned as well as the conditions under which payments to him or to her may be resumed on his or her release from imprisonment. However, no apportionment will be made if the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon as defined in paragraph (e) of this section. Payments of pension authorized under this section will continue until notice is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the imprisonment has terminated.

(a) *Disability pension.* Payment may be made to the spouse, child or children of a veteran disqualified under this section:

(1) If the veteran continues to be eligible except for the provisions of this section, and

(2) If the annual income of the spouse or child is such that death pension would be payable.

(3) At the rate payable under the death pension law or the rate which the veteran was receiving at the time of imprisonment, whichever is less.

(4) From the day following the date of discontinuance of payments to the veteran, subject to payments made to the veteran over the same period, if a claim or intent to file a claim as set forth in § 3.155(b) is received within 1 year after notice to the veteran as required by this section and any necessary evidence is received within 1 year from the date of request; otherwise payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim or intent to file a claim as set forth in § 3.155(b).

(b) *Death pension.* Payment may be made to a child or children where a surviving spouse or child is disqualified under this section:

(1) If surviving spouse is disqualified to child or children at the rate of death pension payable if there were no such surviving spouse; or

(2) If a child is disqualified, to a surviving spouse or other child or children at the rate of death pension payable if there were no such child, and

(3) From the day following the date of discontinuance of payments to the disqualified person, subject to payments made to that person over the same period if evidence of income is received within 1 year after date of request; otherwise payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a claim or intent to file a claim as set forth in § 3.155(b).

(4) The income limitation applicable to eligible persons will be that which would apply if the imprisoned person did not exist.

(c) *Resumption of pension upon release from incarceration.* Pension will be resumed as of the day of release if notice is received within 1 year following release; otherwise resumption will be effective the date of receipt of such notice. Where an award or increased award was made to any other payee based upon the disqualification of the veteran, surviving spouse, or child while in prison, such award will be reduced or discontinued as of date of last payment and pension will be resumed to the released prisoner at a rate which will be the difference, if any, between the total pension payable and the amount which was paid to the other person or persons through the date of last payment and thereafter the full rate.

(d) *Veteran entitled to compensation.* If an imprisoned veteran is entitled to a lesser rate of disability compensation, it shall be awarded as of the 61st day of imprisonment in lieu of the pension the veteran was receiving if the veteran has neither spouse nor child. If the veteran has a spouse or a child, compensation will be awarded only after the veteran has been furnished an explanation of the effect of electing compensation on the amount available for apportionment. If the veteran then requests compensation, it shall be awarded from the date veteran requests the Department of Veterans Affairs to take such action.

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(e) *Fugitive felons.* (1) Pension is not payable on behalf of a veteran for any period during which he or she is a fugitive felon. Pension or death pension is not payable on behalf of a dependent of a veteran for any period during which the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon.

(2) For purposes of this section, the term *fugitive felon* means a person who is a fugitive by reason of:

(i) Fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction for an offense, or an attempt to commit an offense, which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the person flees; or

(ii) Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed for commission of a felony under Federal or State law.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (e) of this section, the term *felony* includes a high misdemeanor under the laws of a State which characterizes as high misdemeanors offenses that would be felony offenses under Federal law.

(4) For purposes of paragraph (e) of this section, the term *dependent* means a spouse, surviving spouse, child, or dependent parent of a veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5313, 5313B)

[26 FR 1601, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 40 FR 6971, Feb. 18, 1975; 40 FR 22254, May 22, 1975; 44 FR 45943, Aug. 6, 1979; 46 FR 47543, Sept. 29, 1981; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997; 68 FR 34543, June 10, 2003; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014]

§ 3.667 School attendance.

(a) *General.* (1) Pension or compensation may be paid from a child's 18th birthday based upon school attendance if the child was at that time pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution and a claim for such benefits is filed within 1 year from the child's 18th birthday.

(2) Pension or compensation based upon a course of instruction at an approved educational institution which was begun after a child's 18th birthday may be paid from the commencement of the course if a claim is filed within 1 year from that date.

(3) An initial award of DIC (dependency and indemnity compensation) to a child in the child's own right is payable from the first day of the month in which the child attains age 18 if the child was pursuing a course of instruc-

tion at an approved educational institution on the child's 18th birthday, and if a claim for benefits is filed within 1 year from the child's 18th birthday. In the case of a child who attains age 18 after September 30, 1981, if the child was, immediately before attaining age 18, counted under 38 U.S.C. 1311(b) for the purpose of determining the amount of DIC payable to the surviving spouse, the effective date of an award of DIC to the child shall be the date the child attains age 18 if a claim for DIC is filed within 1 year from that date.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(e))

(4) An initial award of dependency and indemnity compensation to a child in its own right based upon a course of instruction at an approved educational institution which was begun after the child's 18th birthday may be paid from the first day of the month in which the course commenced if a claim is filed within 1 year from that date.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(e))

(5) Where a child was receiving dependency and indemnity compensation in its own right prior to age 18, payments may be continued from the 18th birthday if the child was then attending an approved educational institution and evidence of such school attendance is received within 1 year from the 18th birthday. Where the child was receiving dependency and indemnity compensation in its own right prior to age 18 and was not attending an approved educational institution on the 18th birthday but commences attendance at an approved educational institution after the 18th birthday, payments may be resumed from the commencing date of the course if evidence of such school attendance is filed within 1 year from that date.

(b) *Vacation periods.* A child is considered to be in school during a vacation or other holiday period if he or she was attending an approved educational institution at the end of the preceding school term and resumes attendance, either in the same or a different approved educational institution, at the beginning of the next term. If an award has been made covering a vacation period, and the child fails to commence or resume school attendance, benefits

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will be terminated the date of last payment or the last day of the month preceding the date of failure to pursue the course, whichever is the earlier.

(c) *Ending dates.* Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, benefits may be authorized through the last day of the month in which a course was or will be completed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(7))

(d) *Transfers to other schools.* When benefits have been authorized based upon school attendance and it is shown that during a part or all of that period the child was pursuing a different course in the same approved educational institution or a course in a different approved educational institution, payments previously made will not be disturbed.

(e) *Accrued benefits only.* When a claim for accrued benefits is filed by or on behalf of a veteran's child over 18 but under 23 years of age, who was pursuing a course of instruction at the time of the payee's death and payment of accrued benefits only is involved, evidence of school attendance need not be confirmed by the school. When the payee's death occurred during a school vacation period, the requirements will be considered to have been met if the child was carried on the school rolls on the last day of the regular school term immediately preceding the date of the payee's death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(7))

(f) *Nonduplication.* Pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be authorized:

(1) After a child has elected to receive educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 (see §3.707 and §21.3023 of this chapter); or

(2) Based on an educational program in a school where the child is wholly supported at the expense of the Federal Government, such as a service academy.

CROSS REFERENCE: Dependents' educational assistance. See §3.707.

[26 FR 1601, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 30 FR 14983, Dec. 3, 1965; 32 FR 12114, Aug. 23, 1967; 34 FR 839, Jan. 18, 1969; 40 FR 22254, May 22, 1975; 47 FR 24552, June 7, 1982; 65 FR 12116, Mar. 8, 2000]

§3.668 [Reserved]

§3.669 Forfeiture.

(a) *General.* Upon receipt of notice from a Regional Counsel (or in cases under the jurisdiction of the Manila Regional Office, the Veterans Service Center Manager) that a case is being formally submitted for consideration of forfeiture of a payee's rights under §3.905 of this part or that the payee has been indicted for subversive activities, payments will be suspended effective date of last payment.

(b) *Fraud or treasonable act—(1) Fraud.* If forfeiture of rights is not declared, payments shall be resumed from date of last payment, if otherwise in order. If it is determined that rights have been forfeited, benefits shall be discontinued effective the commencing date of the award or the day preceding the commission of the act resulting in the forfeiture, whichever is later.

(2) *Treasonable acts.* If forfeiture of rights is not declared, payments shall be resumed from date of last payment, if otherwise in order. If it is determined that rights have been forfeited, benefits shall be discontinued the date of the forfeiture decision or date of last payment, whichever is earlier.

(c) *Subversive activities.* If the payee is acquitted of the charge, payments will be resumed from date of last payment, if otherwise in order. If the payee is convicted, benefits will be discontinued effective the commencing date of the award or the day preceding the commission of the act resulting in the forfeiture, whichever is later.

(d) *Pardons.* (1) Where the payee's offense has been pardoned by the President of the United States, the award will be resumed, if otherwise in order, effective the date of the pardon if claim is filed within 1 year from that date; otherwise benefits may not be authorized for any period prior to the date of filing claim. The award will be subject to any existing overpayment.

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(2) Payments to a dependent of the person whose benefits were declared forfeited before September 2, 1959, will be discontinued effective the day preceding the date of the pardon.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Fraud. See § 3.901. Treasonable acts. See § 3.902. Subversive activities. See § 3.903.

[27 FR 8616, Aug. 29, 1962, as amended 28 FR 5618, June 7, 1963; 39 FR 28630, Aug. 9, 1974; 46 FR 34801, July 6, 1981; 71 FR 52290, Sept. 5, 2006]

CONCURRENT BENEFITS AND ELECTIONS

§ 3.700 General.

Not more than one award of pension, compensation, or emergency officers', regular or reserve retirement pay will be made concurrently to any person based on his or her own service except as provided in § 3.803 relating to naval pension and § 3.750(c) relating to waiver of retirement pay. Not more than one award of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation may be made concurrently to a dependent on account of more than one period of service of a veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(a))

(a) *Veterans*—(1) *Active service pay*. (i) Pension, compensation, or retirement pay on account of his or her own service will not be paid to any person for any period for which he or she receives active service pay.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(c))

(ii) Time spent by members of the ROTC in drills as part of their activities as members of the corps is not active service.

(iii) Reservists may waive their pension, compensation, or retirement pay for periods of field training, instruction, other duty or drills. A waiver may include prospective periods and contain a right of recoupment for the days for which the reservists did not receive payment for duty by reason of failure to report for duty.

(2) *Lump-sum readjustment pay*. (i) Where entitlement to disability compensation was established prior to September 15, 1981, a veteran who has received a lump-sum readjustment pay-

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ment under former 10 U.S.C. 687 (as in effect on September 14, 1981) may receive disability compensation for disability incurred in or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of lump-sum readjustment payment subject to deduction of an amount equal to 75 percent of the amount received as readjustment payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(ii) Readjustment pay authorized under former 10 U.S.C. 3814(a) is not subject to recoupment through withholding of disability compensation, entitlement to which was established prior to September 15, 1981.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(iii) Where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, a veteran who has received a lump-sum readjustment payment may receive disability compensation for disability incurred in or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of the lump-sum readjustment payment, subject to recoupment of the readjustment payment. Where payment of readjustment pay was made on or before September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of readjustment pay. Where payment of readjustment pay was made after September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of readjustment pay less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2))

(iv) The receipt of readjustment pay does not affect the payment of disability compensation based on a subsequent period of service. Compensation payable for service-connected disability incurred or aggravated in a subsequent period of service will not be reduced for the purpose of offsetting readjustment pay based on a prior period of service.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2))

(3) *Severance pay*. Where the disability or disabilities found to be service-connected are the same as those

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upon which disability severance pay is granted, or where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, an award of compensation will be made subject to recoupment of the disability severance pay. Prior to the initial determination of the degree of disability recoupment will be at the full monthly compensation rate payable for the disability or disabilities for which severance pay was granted. Following initial determination of the degree of disability recoupment shall not be at a monthly rate in excess of the monthly compensation payable for that degree of disability. For this purpose the term "initial determination of the degree of disability" means the first regular schedular compensable rating in accordance with the provisions of subpart B, part 4 of this chapter and does not mean a rating based in whole or in part on a need for hospitalization or a period of convalescence. Where entitlement to disability compensation was established prior to September 15, 1981, compensation payable for service-connected disability other than the disability for which disability severance pay was granted will not be reduced for the purpose of recouping disability severance pay. Where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, a veteran may receive disability compensation for disability incurred or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of the severance pay, but VA must recoup from that disability compensation an amount equal to the severance pay. Where payment of severance pay was made on or before September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of the severance pay. Where payment of severance pay was made after September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of the severance pay less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay. For members of the Armed Forces who separated under Chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, on or after January 28, 2008, no recoupment of severance pay will be made for disabilities incurred in line of duty in a combat zone or incurred dur-

ing performance of duty in combat-related operations as designated by the Department of Defense.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2) and 1212(d))

(4) *Improved pension.* If a veteran is entitled to improved pension on the basis of the veteran's own service and is also entitled to pension under any pension program currently or previously in effect on the basis of any other person's service, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall pay the veteran only the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(i))

(5) *Separation pay and special separation benefits.* (i) Where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, a veteran who has received separation pay may receive disability compensation for disability incurred in or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of separation pay subject to recoupment of the separation pay. Where payment of separation pay was made on or before September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of separation pay. Where payment of separation pay was made after September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of separation pay less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay. The Federal income tax withholding amount is the flat withholding rate for Federal income tax withholding.

(ii) The receipt of separation pay does not affect the payment of disability compensation based on a subsequent period of service. Compensation payable for service-connected disability incurred or aggravated in a subsequent period of service will not be reduced for the purpose of offsetting separation pay based on a prior period of service.

(iii) Where payment of special separation benefits under 10 U.S.C. 1174a was made on or after December 5, 1991, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of special separation benefits less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay. The Federal

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income tax withholding amount is the flat withholding rate for Federal income tax withholding.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1174 and 1174a)

(b) *Dependents*—(1) *Surviving spouse*. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (a)(4) of this section, the receipt of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation by a surviving spouse because of the death of any veteran, or receipt of pension or compensation because of his or her own service, shall not bar the payment to the surviving spouse of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation because of the death or disability of any other veteran; however, other than insurance, concurrent benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may not be authorized to a surviving spouse by reason of the death of more than one veteran to whom the surviving spouse has been married. The surviving spouse may elect to receive benefits based on the death of one such spouse and the election places the right to benefits based on the deaths of other spouses in suspense. The suspension may be lifted at any time by another election based on the death of another spouse. Benefits payable in the elected case will be subject to prior payments for the same period based on the death of the other spouse where, under the provisions of §3.400(c), there is entitlement in the elected case prior to date of receipt of the election.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304)

(2) *Children*. Except as provided in §3.703 and paragraph (a)(4) of this section, the receipt of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation by a child on account of the death of a veteran or the receipt by the child of pension or compensation on account of his or her own service will not bar the payment of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation on account of the death or disability of any other veteran.

(3) *Parents*. The receipt of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation by a parent on account of the death of a veteran or receipt by him or her of pension or compensation

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on account of his or her own service, will not bar the payment of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation on account of the death or disability of any other person.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(b))

[26 FR 1601, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 29 FR 11359, Aug. 6, 1964; 29 FR 15207, Nov. 11, 1964; 30 FR 11389, Sept. 8, 1965; 35 FR 10648, July 1, 1970; 40 FR 59346, Dec. 23, 1975; 44 FR 45943, Aug. 6, 1979; 52 FR 27340, July 21, 1987; 56 FR 1111, Jan. 11, 1991; 67 FR 60868, Sept. 27, 2002; 74 FR 26957, June 5, 2009; 74 FR 36610, July 24, 2009]

§3.701 Elections of pension or compensation.

(a) *General*. Except as otherwise provided, a person entitled to receive pension or compensation under more than one law or section of a law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may elect to receive whichever benefit, regardless of whether it is the greater or lesser benefit, even though the election reduces the benefits payable to his or her dependents. Such person may at any time elect or reelect the other benefit. An election by a veteran controls the rights of all dependents in that case. An election by a surviving spouse controls the claims of all children including children over 18 and children not in the custody of the surviving spouse. The election of improved pension by a surviving spouse, however, shall not prejudice the rights of any child receiving an apportionment on December 31, 1978. Termination of a marriage or marital relationship which had been the reason for terminating an award of section 306 or old-law pension does not restore to the surviving spouse the right to receive section 306 or old-law pension. The claimant's entitlement, if otherwise established, is under the current provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1541.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(b) *Form of election*. An election must be in writing and must specify the benefit the person wishes to receive.

(c) *Change from one law to another*. Except as otherwise provided, where payments of pension or compensation are being made to a person under one law, the right to receive benefits under

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another law being in suspension, and a higher rate of pension or compensation becomes payable under the other law, benefits at the higher rate will not be paid for any date prior to the date of receipt of an election.

[26 FR 1602, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 36 FR 12618, July 2, 1971; 44 FR 45943, Aug. 6, 1979; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014]

§ 3.702 Dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) *Right to elect.* A person who is eligible for death compensation and who has entitlement to dependency and indemnity compensation pursuant to the provisions of § 3.5(b)(2) or (3) may receive dependency and indemnity compensation upon the filing of a claim. The claim of such a person for service-connected death benefits shall be considered a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation subject to confirmation by the claimant. The effective date of payment is controlled by the provisions of § 3.400(c)(4).

(b) *Effect on child's entitlement.* Where a surviving spouse is entitled to death compensation, the amount of which is based in part on the existence of a child who has attained the age of 18 years, and elects to receive dependency and indemnity compensation, the independent award of dependency and indemnity compensation to which the child is entitled will be awarded to or for the child without separate election by or for the child. Should such a surviving spouse not elect to receive dependency and indemnity compensation, the independent dependency and indemnity compensation to which a child who has attained 18 years of age is entitled, may be awarded upon application by or for the child. The effective date of award in these situations will be in accordance with § 3.400(c)(4)(ii).

(c) *Limitation.* A claim for dependency and indemnity compensation may not be filed or withdrawn after the death of the surviving spouse, child, or parent.

(d) *Finality of election.* (1) Except as noted in paragraph (d)(2), an election to receive dependency and indemnity compensation is final and the claimant may not thereafter reelect death pension or compensation in that case. An election is final when the payee (or the payee's fiduciary) has negotiated one

check for this benefit or when the payee dies after filing an election but prior to negotiation of a check.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (d)(1), effective November 2, 1994, a surviving spouse who is receiving dependency and indemnity compensation may elect to receive death pension instead of such compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1317)

(e) *Surviving spouse becomes entitled.* A surviving spouse who becomes eligible to receive death compensation by reason of liberalizing provisions of any law may receive death compensation or elect dependency and indemnity compensation even though dependency and indemnity compensation has been paid to a child or children of the veteran.

(f) *Death pension rate.* (1) Effective October 1, 1961, where the monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to a surviving spouse who has children is less than the monthly rate of death pension which would be payable to such surviving spouse if the veteran's death had not been service connected, dependency and indemnity compensation shall be paid to such surviving spouse in an amount equal to the pension rate for any month (or part thereof) in which this rate is greater.

(2) Effective June 22, 1966, where the monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to a surviving spouse who has children is less than the monthly rate of death pension which would be payable for the children if the veteran's death had not been service connected and the surviving spouse were not entitled to such pension, dependency and indemnity compensation shall be payable to the surviving spouse in an amount equal to the monthly rate of death pension which would be payable to the children for any month (or part thereof) in which this rate is greater.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1312(b))

CROSS REFERENCE: Deaths prior to January 1, 1957. See § 3.400(c)(3)(i).

[35 FR 18661, Dec. 9, 1970, as amended at 39 FR 20205, June 7, 1974; 41 FR 17387, Apr. 26, 1976; 44 FR 45943, Aug. 6, 1979; 60 FR 18356, Apr. 11, 1995; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

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§ 3.703 Two parents in same parental line.

(a) *General.* Death compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable for a child if dependency and indemnity compensation is paid to or for a child or to the surviving spouse on account of the child by reason of the death of another parent in the same parental line where both parents died before June 9, 1960. Where the death of one such parent occurred on or after June 9, 1960, gratuitous benefits may not be paid or furnished to or on account of any child by reason of the death of more than one parent in the same parental line.

(b) *Election.* The child or his or her fiduciary may elect to receive benefits based on the service of either veteran. An election of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation based on the death of one parent places the right to such benefits based on the death of another parent in suspension. The suspension may be lifted at any time by making another election.

(c) *Other payees.* Where a child has elected to receive pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation or dependents' educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35 based on the death of a veteran, he (or she) will be excluded from consideration in determining the eligibility or rate payable to a surviving spouse or another child or children in the case of another deceased veteran in the same parental line. See § 3.659(b).

CROSS REFERENCES: Two-parent cases. See § 3.503(a)(7). Two parents in same parental line. See § 3.659.

[27 FR 4993, May 29, 1962, as amended at 39 FR 20205, June 7, 1974]

§ 3.704 Elections within class of dependents.

(a) *Children.* Where children are eligible to receive monthly benefits under more than one law in the same case, the election of benefits under one law by or on behalf of one child will not serve to increase the rate allowable for any other child under another law in that case. The rate payable for each child will not exceed the amount which would be paid if all children were re-

ceiving benefits under the same law. Where a child is no longer eligible to receive pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation because of having elected dependents' educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, the child will be excluded from consideration in determining the rate payable for another child or children.

(b) *Parents.* If there are two parents eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and only one parent files claim for this benefit, the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation for that parent will not exceed the amount which would be paid to him or her if both parents had filed claim for dependency and indemnity compensation. The rate of death compensation for the other parent will not exceed the amount which would be paid if both parents were receiving this benefit.

[26 FR 1602, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 4993, May 29, 1962; 34 FR 839, Jan. 18, 1969; 39 FR 20205, June 7, 1974; 54 FR 34981, Aug. 23, 1989]

§§ 3.705-3.706 [Reserved]

§ 3.707 Dependents' educational assistance.

(a) *Child.* The conditions applicable to the bar to payment of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation for a child concurrently with educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 are set forth in § 21.3023 of this chapter.

(b) *Spouse or surviving spouse.* There is no bar to the payment of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation to a spouse concurrently with educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35.

CROSS REFERENCES: Discontinuance. See § 3.503(a)(8). Certification. See § 3.807.

[34 FR 840, Jan. 18, 1969, as amended at 41 FR 29120, July 15, 1976]

§ 3.708 Federal Employees' Compensation.

(a) *Military service—(1) Initial election.* Where a person is entitled to compensation from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) based upon disability or death due to service in the Armed Forces and

is also entitled based upon service in the Armed Forces to pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the claimant will elect which benefit he or she will receive. Pension compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be paid in such instances by the Department of Veterans Affairs concurrently with compensation from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs. Benefits are not payable by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs for disability or death incurred on or after January 1, 1957, based on military service.

(2) *Right of reelection.* Persons receiving compensation from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs based on death due to military service may elect to receive dependency and indemnity compensation at any time. Once payment of dependency and indemnity compensation has been granted, all further right to FECA benefits is extinguished and only dependency and indemnity compensation is payable thereafter.

(3) *Rights of children.* Where primary title is vested in the surviving spouse, the claimant's election controls the rights of any of the veteran's children, regardless of whether they are in the claimant's custody and regardless of the fact that such children may not be eligible to receive benefits under laws administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs. A child who is eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation or other benefits independent of the surviving spouse's entitlement may receive such benefits concurrently with payment of FECA benefits to the surviving spouse.

(4) *Entitlement based on 38 U.S.C. 1151.* The provisions of this paragraph are applicable also in those cases in which disability or death occurs as a result of having submitted to an examination, medical or surgical treatment, hospitalization or hospital care, training, or compensated work therapy program. See §§3.358 and 3.361.

(b) *Civilian employment*—(1) *Same disability or death.* Where a person is entitled to compensation from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs

based upon civilian employment and is also entitled to compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the same disability or death, the claimant will elect which benefit he or she will receive. On or after September 13, 1960, an award cannot be approved for payment of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation concurrently with compensation from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs in such instances and an election to receive benefits from either agency is final. See §3.958. There is no right of reelection. (5 U.S.C. 8116(b)) A child who is eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation or other benefits independent of the surviving spouse's entitlement may receive such benefits concurrently with payment of FECA benefits to the surviving spouse.

(2) *Not the same disability or death.* There is no prohibition against payment of benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act concurrently with other benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs when such benefits are not based on the same disability or death.

[39 FR 18099, May 23, 1974, as amended at 41 FR 29120, July 15, 1976; 44 FR 45943, Aug. 6, 1979; 69 FR 46435, Aug. 3, 2004]

§3.710 Civil service annuitants.

Department of Veterans Affairs benefits may be paid concurrently with civil service retirement benefits. However, payments will be considered income as provided in §3.262 (e) and (h).

[29 FR 15208, Nov. 11, 1964]

§3.711 Improved pension elections.

Except as otherwise provided by this section and §3.712, a person entitled to receive section 306 or old-law pension on December 31, 1978, may elect to receive improved pension under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541, or 1542 as in effect on January 1, 1979. Except as provided by §3.714, an election of improved pension is final when the payee (or the payee's fiduciary) negotiates one check for this benefit and there is no right to reelection. Any veteran eligible to make an election under this section who is married to a veteran

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who is also eligible to make such an election may not receive improved pension unless the veteran's spouse also elects to receive improved pension.

(Authority: Sec. 306(a)(1) of Pub. L. 95-588, 92 Stat. 2497)

[46 FR 11661, Feb. 10, 1981]

§3.712 Improved pension elections; surviving spouses of Spanish-American War veterans.

(a) *General.* A surviving spouse of a Spanish-American War veteran eligible for pension under 38 U.S.C. 1536 may elect to receive improved pension under 38 U.S.C. 1541. Except as provided by §3.714, an election of improved pension is final when the payee (or the payee's fiduciary) negotiates one check for this benefit and there is no right of reelection.

(b) *Aid and attendance.* A surviving spouse of a Spanish-American War veteran who is receiving or entitled to receive pension based on need for regular aid and attendance shall be paid whichever is the greater: The monthly rate authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1536 (a) and (b) and 1544 or the monthly rate authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 544, as 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 1544 were in effect on December 31, 1978, based on the surviving spouse's current income and net worth. Pension under 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 1544, as in effect on December 31, 1978, is not payable if the current size of the surviving spouse's net worth is a bar to payment under §3.252(b) or if the surviving spouse's income exceeds the applicable limitation as in effect on December 31, 1978. Elections are not required for this purpose. The change in rate shall be effective the first day of the month in which the facts warrant such change.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1536)

[44 FR 45943, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 46 FR 11661, Feb. 10, 1981; 61 FR 67950, Dec. 26, 1996]

§3.713 Effective dates of improved pension elections.

(a) *General.* Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section an election to receive improved pension shall be effective the date of receipt of the election.

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(b) *Persons entitled to pension on December 31, 1978.* The effective date of an election to receive improved pension filed before October 1, 1979, by a person entitled to receive either old-law pension or section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, shall be January 1, 1979, or if to the beneficiary's advantage, at any date after January 1, 1979, and before October 1, 1979. The amount of improved pension payable from the effective date of the election shall be reduced by the amount of old-law pension or section 306 pension paid to the beneficiary for such period.

(Authority: Sec. 306(d) of Pub. L. 95-588, 92 Stat. 2497).

[44 FR 45944, Aug. 6, 1979]

§3.714 Improved pension elections—public assistance beneficiaries.

(a) *Definitions.* The following definitions are applicable to this section.

(1) *Pensioner.* This means a person who was entitled to section 306 or old-law pension, or a dependent of such a person for the purposes of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code as in effect on December 31, 1978.

(2) *Public assistance.* This means payments under the following titles of the Social Security Act:

(i) Title I (Grants to States for Old Age Assistance and Medical Assistance to the Aged).

(ii) Title X (Grants to States for Aid to the Blind).

(iii) Title XIV (Grants to States for Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled).

(iv) Part A of title IV (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

(v) Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind and Disabled).

(3) *Medicaid.* This means a State plan for medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

(4) *Informed election.* The term "informed election" means an election of improved pension (or a reaffirmation of a previous election of improved pension) after the Department of Veterans Affairs has complied with the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) *General.* In some States only a person in receipt of public assistance is eligible for medicaid. When this is the

case the following applies effective January 1, 1979:

(1) A pensioner may not be required to elect improved pension to receive, or to continue to receive, public assistance; or

(2) A pensioner may not be denied (or suffer a reduction in the amount of) public assistance by reason of failure or refusal to elect improved pension.

(c) *Public assistance deemed to continue.* Public assistance (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93-233, sec. 13(c)) payable to a pensioner may have been terminated because the pensioner's income increased as a result of electing improved pension. In this instance public assistance (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93-233, sec. 13(c)) shall be deemed to have remained payable to a pensioner for each month after December 1978 when the following conditions are met:

(1) The pensioner was in receipt of pension for the month of December 1978; and

(2) The pensioner was in receipt of public assistance (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93-233, sec. 13(c)) prior to June 17, 1980, and for the month of December 1978, and

(3) The pensioner's public assistance payments (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93-233, sec. 13(c)) were discontinued because of an increase in income resulting from an election of improved pension.

(d) *End of the deemed period of entitlement to public assistance.* The deemed period of entitlement to public assistance (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93-233, sec. 13(c)) ends the first calendar month that begins more than 10 days after a pensioner makes an informed election of improved pension. (If the pensioner is unable to make an informed election the informed election may be made by a member of the pensioner's family.) A pensioner who fails to disaffirm a previously made election of improved pension within the time limits set forth in paragraph (e) of this section shall be deemed to have reaffirmed the previous election. This will also end the deemed period of entitlement to public assistance.

(e) *Notice of right to make informed election or disaffirm election previously*

made. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall send a written notice to each pensioner to whom paragraph (b) of this section applies and who is eligible to elect or who has elected improved pension. The notice shall be in clear and understandable language. It shall include the following:

(1) A description of the consequences to the pensioner (and the pensioner's family if applicable) of losing medicaid eligibility because of an increase in income resulting from electing improved pension; and

(2) A description of the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section; and

(3) In the case of a pensioner who has previously elected improved pension, a form for the purpose of enabling the pensioner to disaffirm the previous election of improved pensions; and

(4) The following provisions of Pub. L. 96-272, sec. 310(b)(2)(B):

(i) That a pensioner has 90 days from the date the notice is mailed to the pensioner to disaffirm a previous election by completing the disaffirmation form and mailing it to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(ii) That a pensioner who disaffirms a previous election shall receive, beginning the calendar month after the calendar month in which the Department of Veterans Affairs receives the disaffirmation, the amount of pension payable if improved pension had not been elected.

(iii) That a pensioner who disaffirms a previous election may again elect improved pension but without a right to disaffirm the subsequent election.

(iv) That a pensioner who disaffirms an election of improved pension shall not be indebted to the United States for the period in which the pensioner received improved pension.

(Authority: Pub. L. 96-272, sec. 310; 94 Stat. 500)

(f) *Notification to the Social Security Administration.* The Department of Veterans Affairs shall promptly furnish the Social Security Administration the following information:

(1) The name and identifying information of each pensioner who disaffirms his or her election of improved pension.

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(2) The name and identifying information of each pensioner who fails to disaffirm and election of improved pension within the 90-day period described in paragraph (e)(4)(i) of this section.

(3) The name and identifying information of each pensioner who after disaffirming his or her election of improved pension, subsequently reelected improved pension.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[46 FR 11661, Feb. 10, 1981, as amended at 71 FR 44919, Aug. 8, 2006]

§ 3.715 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990, as amended.

(a) *Compensation.* (1) A radiation-exposed veteran, as defined in 38 CFR 3.309(d)(3), who receives a payment under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2210 note) (RECA), will not be denied compensation to which the veteran is entitled under 38 CFR 3.309(d) for months beginning after March 26, 2002.

(2) A veteran who is not a “radiation-exposed veteran,” as defined in 38 CFR 3.309(d)(3), is not entitled to VA compensation for disability caused by a disease that is attributable to exposure to radiation for which the veteran has received a payment under RECA.

(b) *Dependency and indemnity compensation.* A person who receives a payment under RECA based upon a veteran’s death will not be denied dependency and indemnity compensation to which the person is entitled under 38 CFR 3.5 and 3.22 for months beginning after March 26, 2002.

(c) *Offset of RECA payment against VA benefits.* Notwithstanding paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, the amount of a RECA payment will be deducted from the amount of compensation payable pursuant to § 3.309(d) or the amount of dependency and indemnity compensation payable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112(c)(4), 1310(c); 42 U.S.C. 2210 note)

[71 FR 44919, Aug. 8, 2006]

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RETIREMENT

§ 3.750 Entitlement to concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation.

(a) *Definition of military retired pay.* For the purposes of this part, military retired pay is payment received by a veteran that is classified as retired pay by the Service Department, including retainer pay, based on the recipient’s service as a member of the Armed Forces or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Environmental Science Services Administration, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(b) *Payment of both military retired pay and disability compensation or improved pension—(1) Compensation.* Subject to paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section, a veteran who is entitled to military retired pay and disability compensation for a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more, or a combination of service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or more, under the schedule for rating disabilities (38 CFR part 4, subpart B), is entitled to receive both payments subject to the phase-in period described in paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) *Chapter 61 disability retirees retiring with 20 or more years of service.* Disability retired pay payable under 10 U.S.C. Chapter 61 to a veteran with 20 or more years of creditable service may be paid concurrently with disability compensation to a qualifying veteran subject to the following:

(i) Any waiver required during the phase-in period under paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section; and

(ii) If the veteran’s disability retired pay exceeds the amount of retired pay the veteran would have received had the veteran retired based on length of service, the veteran must waive that excess amount of disability retired pay in order to receive VA disability compensation.

(3) *Chapter 61 disability retirees retiring with less than 20 years of service.* Veterans who receive disability retired pay under 10 U.S.C. Chapter 61 with less than 20 years of creditable service are not eligible for concurrent receipt.

(4) *Improved Pension.* A veteran may receive improved pension and military retired pay at the same time without having to waive military retired pay. However, in determining entitlement to improved pension, VA will treat military retired pay in the same manner as countable income from other sources.

(c) *Waiver*—(1) *When a waiver is necessary.* (i) A waiver of military retired pay is necessary in order to receive disability compensation when a veteran is eligible for both military retired pay and disability compensation but is not eligible under paragraphs (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section to receive both benefits at the same time.

(ii) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, all veterans who are eligible to receive both military retired pay and disability compensation at the same time under paragraphs (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section must file a waiver in order to receive the maximum allowable amount of disability compensation during the phase-in period. The phase-in period ends on December 31, 2013. After the phase-in period, veterans retired under 10 U.S.C. chapter 61 who are eligible for concurrent receipt must still file a waiver under the circumstances described in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1414, 38 U.S.C. 5304, 5305)

(2) *When a waiver is not necessary.* Unless paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section applies, veterans who are entitled to receive disability compensation based on a VA determination of individual unemployability as well as veterans rated 100-percent disabled under the VA schedule for rating disabilities need not file waivers of military retired pay. The phase-in period does not apply to this group of veterans.

(3) *How to file a waiver of military retired pay.* A veteran may request a waiver of military retired pay in any written, signed statement, including a VA form, which reflects a desire to waive all or some military retired pay. The statement must be submitted to VA or to the Federal agency that pays the veteran's military retired pay. VA will treat as a waiver an application

for VA compensation filed by a veteran who is entitled to military retired pay.

(d) *Elections and the right to reelect either benefit.* (1) A veteran who has filed a waiver of military retired pay under this section has elected to receive disability compensation. A veteran may reelect between benefits covered by this section at any time by submitting a written, signed statement to VA or to the Federal agency that pays the veteran's military retired pay.

(2) An election filed within 1 year from the date of notification of Department of Veterans Affairs entitlement will be considered as "timely filed" for effective date purposes. See § 3.401(e)(1). If the veteran is incompetent, the 1-year period will begin on the date that notification is sent to the next friend or fiduciary. In initial determinations, elections may be applied retroactively if the claimant was not advised of his or her right of election and its effect.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(a), 5305)

[71 FR 67061, Nov. 20, 2006, as amended at 74 FR 11647, Mar. 19, 2009]

§ 3.751 Statutory awards; retired service personnel.

Retired Regular and Reserve officers and enlisted personnel are not entitled to statutory awards of disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs in addition to their retirement pay. However, under § 3.750(c), eligible persons may waive an amount equal to the basic disability compensation and any statutory award otherwise payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[41 FR 53797, Dec. 9, 1976]

§ 3.752 [Reserved]

§ 3.753 Public Health Service.

Disability compensation may be paid concurrently with retirement pay to an officer of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, who was receiving disability compensation on December 31, 1956, as follows:

(a) An officer who incurred a disability before July 29, 1945, but retired for nondisability purposes prior to such date.

(b) An officer who incurred a disability before July 29, 1945, but retired

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for nondisability purposes between July 4, 1952, and December 31, 1956.

(c) An officer who incurred a disability between July 29, 1945, and July 3, 1952, but retired for nondisability purposes between July 4, 1952, and December 31, 1956.

[26 FR 1604, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.754 Emergency officers' retirement pay.

A retired emergency officer of World War I has basic eligibility to retirement pay by the Department of Veterans Affairs under Pub. L. 87-875 (sec. 11(b), Pub. L. 85-857) from date of filing application therefor after October 24, 1962, if the following requirements are met:

(a) Emergency officers' retirement pay would have been granted under Pub. L. 506, 70th Congress (Act of May 24, 1928) if application therefor had been filed before May 25, 1929.

(b) Such retirement pay would have continued to be payable under section 10 of Pub. L. 2, 73d Congress, or under section 1 of Pub. L. 743, 76th Congress.

(c) The monthly rate of retirement pay at any time between May 24, 1928 and May 24, 1929, inclusive, would have been lower than the monthly rate of disability compensation payable to the retired emergency officer.

CROSS REFERENCE: Emergency officers' retirement pay. See § 3.953(b).

[28 FR 72, Jan. 3, 1963]

SPECIAL BENEFITS

§ 3.800 Disability or death due to hospitalization, etc.

This section applies to claims received by VA before October 1, 1997. For claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997, see §§ 3.362 and 3.363.

(a) Where disease, injury, death or the aggravation of an existing disease or injury occurs as a result of having submitted to an examination, medical or surgical treatment, hospitalization or the pursuit of a course of vocational rehabilitation under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and not the result of his (or her) own willful misconduct, disability or death compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation will be

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awarded for such disease, injury, aggravation, or death as if such condition were service connected. The commencing date of benefits is subject to the provisions of § 3.400(i).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151)

(1) Benefits under paragraph (a) of this section will be in lieu of any benefits the veteran may be entitled to receive under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act inasmuch as concurrent payments are prohibited. (See § 3.708.)

(2) Where any person is awarded a judgment on or after December 1, 1962, against the United States in a civil action brought pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1346(b), or enters into a settlement or compromise on or after December 1, 1962, under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677, by reason of a disability, aggravation or death within the purview of this section, no compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation shall be paid to such person for any month beginning after the date such judgment, settlement, or compromise on account of such disability, aggravation, or death becomes final until the total amount of benefits which would be paid except for this provision equals the total amount included in such judgment, settlement, or compromise. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply, however, to any portion of such compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation payable for any period preceding the end of the month in which such judgment, settlement or compromise becomes final.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) If an administrative award was made or a settlement or compromise became final before December 1, 1962, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be authorized for any period after such award settlement, or compromise whether before or after December 1, 1962. There is no bar to payment of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation and no set-off because of a judgment which became final before December 1, 1962, unless specified in the terms of the judgment.

(4) *Offset of award of benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39.*

(i) If a judgment, settlement, or compromise covered by paragraph (a)(2) of this section becomes final on or after December 10, 2004, and includes an amount that is specifically designated for a purpose for which benefits are provided under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 (38 CFR 3.809 and 3.809a) or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 (38 CFR 3.808), and if VA awards 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 benefits after the date on which the judgment, settlement, or compromise becomes final, the amount of the award will be reduced by the amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise for the same purpose.

(ii) If the amount described in paragraph (a)(4)(i) of this section is greater than the amount of an award under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39, the excess amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise will be offset against benefits otherwise payable under 38 U.S.C. chapter 11.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151(b)(2))

(b)(1) If death occurred prior to January 1, 1957, the benefit payable will be death compensation. See §§ 3.5(b)(2) and 3.702 as to right of election to dependency and indemnity compensation.

(2) If death occurs on or after January 1, 1957, the benefit payable will be dependency and indemnity compensation.

CROSS REFERENCES: Claims; injury due to hospital treatment, etc. See § 3.154. Effective dates; disability or death due to hospitalization, etc. See § 3.400(i).

[26 FR 1604, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11892, Dec. 1, 1962; 29 FR 16252, Dec. 4, 1964; 39 FR 34532, Sept. 26, 1974; 53 FR 23237, June 21, 1988; 64 FR 1132, Jan. 8, 1999; 69 FR 46435, Aug. 3, 2004; 71 FR 44919, Aug. 8, 2006; 75 FR 57861, Sept. 23, 2010]

§ 3.801 Special acts.

(a) *General.* A special act is one authorizing the payment of benefits to a particular person or persons. If a beneficiary in a special act has no claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs, a formal application must be filed before benefits may be awarded.

(b) *Limitations.* Where the rate, commencement, and duration are fixed by

a special act, they are not subject to be varied by the provisions and limitations of the public laws, but where not fixed, the rate and continuance of the benefit is subject to variance in accordance with the public laws.

(c) *Provisions of act.* (1) When pension or compensation is granted by a special act, which fixes the rate and commencement, the rate thereunder cannot be increased nor can any other pension or compensation be paid in the absence of the payee's election, unless the special act expressly states that the benefit granted thereby is in addition to the benefit which the person is entitled to receive under any public law.

(2) If a special act corrects the nature of separation from military service and does not grant pension or compensation directly, the claimant acquires a status so that he or she may apply for and be allowed benefits. The claimant, then, is placed in the same position he or she would have been if originally released under conditions other than dishonorable.

(d) *Service.* A special act of Congress, reciting that a person is considered to have been mustered into the service on a named date and honorably discharged on a subsequently named date, is sufficient regardless of whether the service department has any record of such service.

(e) *Hospitalization.* Pension payable under special acts is subject to reduction pursuant to § 3.551.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5503)

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 39 FR 34532, Sept. 26, 1974; 68 FR 34543, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.802 Medal of Honor.

(a) The Secretary of the Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Air Force, or the Department of Transportation will determine the eligibility of applicants to be entered on the Medal of Honor Roll and will deliver to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs a certified copy of each certificate issued in which the right of the person named in the certificate to the special pension is set forth. The special

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pension will be authorized on the basis of such certification.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1560, 1561)

(b) An award of special pension at the monthly rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1562 will be made as of the date of filing of the application with the Secretary concerned. The special pension will be paid in addition to all other payments under laws of the United States. However, a person awarded more than one Medal of Honor may not receive more than one special pension.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1562)

(c) VA will pay to each person who is receiving or who in the future receives Medal of Honor pension a retroactive lump sum payment equal to the total amount of Medal of Honor pension that person would have received during the period beginning the first day of the month after the date of the event for which the veteran earned the Medal of Honor and ending on the last day of the month preceding the month in which pension was awarded under paragraph (b) of this section. VA will calculate the lump sum payment using the monthly Medal of Honor pension rates in effect from the first day of the month after the date of the event for which the veteran earned the Medal of Honor, to the last day of the month preceding the month in which the individual was initially awarded the Medal of Honor pension. VA will not make a retroactive lump sum payment under this section before October 1, 2003.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1562(f))

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 32 FR 6840, May 4, 1967; 44 FR 22721, Apr. 17, 1979; 52 FR 34909, Sept. 16, 1987; 68 FR 55467, Sept. 26, 2003]

§ 3.803 Naval pension.

(a) Payment of naval pension will be authorized on the basis of a certification by the Secretary of the Navy.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 6160)

(b) Awards of naval pension in effect prior to July 14, 1943, or renewed or continued may be paid concurrently with Department of Veterans Affairs pension or compensation; however,

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naval pension allowance under 10 U.S.C. 6160 may not exceed one-fourth of the rate of disability pension or compensation otherwise payable, exclusive of additional allowances for dependents or specific disabilities.

(c) New awards of naval pension may not be made concurrently with Department of Veterans Affairs pension or compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(a))

(d) Naval pension remaining unpaid at the date of the veteran's death is not payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs as an accrued benefit.

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 28 FR 2857, Mar. 22, 1963; 44 FR 22721, Apr. 17, 1979]

§ 3.804 Special allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1312.

(a) The provisions of this section are applicable to the payment of a special allowance by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the surviving dependents of a veteran who served after September 15, 1940, and who died on or after January 1, 1957, as a result of such service and who was not a fully and currently insured individual under title II of the Social Security Act.

(b) The special allowance is not payable: (1) Where the veteran's death resulted from Department of Veterans Affairs hospitalization, treatment, examination, or training;

(2) Where the veteran's death was due to service rendered with the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, or was due to service in the Philippine Scouts under section 14, Pub. L. 190, 79th Congress.

(c) A claim for dependency and indemnity compensation on a form prescribed will be accepted as a claim for the special allowance where it is determined that this benefit is payable or where a specific inquiry concerning entitlement to the special allowance is received.

(d) Payment of this allowance will be authorized on the basis of a certification from the Social Security Administration. Award actions subsequent to the original award, including

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adjustment and discontinuance, will be made in accordance with new certifications from the Social Security Administration.

(e)(1) The special allowance will be payable only if the death occurred: (i) While on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training as a member of a uniformed service (line of duty is not a factor); or

(ii) As the result of a disease or injury which was incurred or aggravated in line of duty while on active duty or active duty for training, or an injury which was incurred or aggravated in line of duty while on inactive duty training, as a member of a uniformed service after September 15, 1940, if the veteran was discharged or released from the period of such duty, under conditions other than dishonorable.

(2) Where the veteran died after separation from service: (i) Discharge from service must have been under conditions other than dishonorable as outlined in § 3.12.

(ii) Line of duty and service connection will be determined as outlined in § 3.1(k) and (m) and the § 3.300 series.

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.805 Loan guaranty for surviving spouses; certification.

A certification of loan guaranty benefits may be extended to surviving spouses based on an application filed on or after January 1, 1959, if:

(a) The veteran served in the Armed Forces of the United States (Allied Nations are not included) at any time on or after September 16, 1940; and

(b) The veteran died in service; or

(c) The veteran died after separation from service and such separation was under conditions other than dishonorable provided the veteran's death was the result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by service in line of duty rendered on or after September 16, 1940, regardless of the date of entrance into such service (cases where compensation is payable because of death resulting from hospitalization, treatment, examination, or training are not included); and

(d) The surviving spouse meets the requirements of the term "surviving spouse" as outlined in § 3.50; and

(e) The veteran's surviving spouse is unmarried; and

(f) The applicant is not an eligible veteran.

CROSS REFERENCES: Wife, widow or spouse. See § 3.50(b). Terminated marital relationships. See § 3.55.

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 31 FR 4347, Mar. 12, 1966; 37 FR 24662, Nov. 18, 1972; 40 FR 54245, Nov. 21, 1975, 41 FR 49636, Nov. 10, 1976; 44 FR 22721, Apr. 17, 1979; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997]

§ 3.806 Death gratuity; certification.

(a) Where a veteran dies on or after January 1, 1957, and during the 120-day period which begins on the day following the date of his or her discharge or release from active duty, active duty for training, or inactive training duty, the Department of Veterans Affairs will certify that fact to the Secretary concerned if the Department of Veterans Affairs determines on the basis of a claim filed with it that:

(1) Death resulted from:

(i) Disease or injury incurred or aggravated while on such active duty or active duty for training; or

(ii) Injury incurred or aggravated while on such inactive duty training; and

(2) The deceased person was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

(b) In all cases, other than listed in paragraph (a) of this section, the certification will be furnished at the request of the Secretary concerned.

(c) For the purposes of this section, line of duty is not a factor. The standards, criteria, and procedures for determining incurrence or aggravation of a disease or injury under paragraph (a) of this section are those applicable under disability and death compensation laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1323)

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 40 FR 54245, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 3.807 Dependents' educational assistance; certification.

For the purposes of dependents' educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 (see § 21.3020), the child,

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spouse or surviving spouse of a veteran or serviceperson will have basic eligibility if the following conditions are met:

(a) *General.* Basic eligibility exists if the veteran:

(1) Was discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable, or died in service; and

(2) Has a permanent total service-connected disability; or

(3) A permanent total service-connected disability was in existence at the date of the veteran's death; or

(4) Died as a result of a service-connected disability; or (if a serviceperson)

(5) Is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and

(i) Now is, and, for a period of more than 90 days, has been listed by the Secretary concerned as missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign Government or power; or

(ii) Has been determined by VA to have a total disability permanent in nature incurred or aggravated in the line of duty during active military, naval, or air service; is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment for such disability; is likely to be discharged or released from such service for such disability; and the pursuit of a course of education by such individual's spouse or child for which benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 are sought occurred after December 22, 2006.

(b) *Service.* Service-connected disability or death must have been the result of active military, naval, or air service on or after April 21, 1898. (Pub. L. 89-358) Effective September 30, 1966, educational assistance for a child (but not for a spouse or surviving spouse) may be authorized based on service in the Philippine Commonwealth Army or as a Philippine Scout as defined in § 3.40(b), (c), or (d) of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3565)

(c) *Service connection.* For purpose of this section, the term "service-connected disability" encompasses combinations of disabilities of paired organs or extremities treated as if service-connected under the provisions of

§ 3.383(a) of this part. The standards and criteria for determining service connection, either direct or presumptive, are those applicable to the period of service during which the disability was incurred or aggravated (38 U.S.C. 3501(a)). Cases where eligibility for service-connected benefits is established under § 3.358, 3.361, or 3.800 are not included.

(d) *Relationship*—(1) "Child" means the son or daughter of a veteran who meets the requirements of § 3.57, except as to age and marital status.

(2) "Spouse" means a person whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of § 3.50(a) of this part.

(3) "Surviving spouse" means a person whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of §§ 3.50(b) or 3.52 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1160, 3501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Discontinuance. See § 3.503(a)(8) Election; concurrent benefits. See § 3.707 Nonduplication. See § 21.3023 of this chapter.

[29 FR 9537, July 14, 1964, as amended at 31 FR 4347, Mar. 12, 1966; 34 FR 840, Jan. 18, 1969; 38 FR 8658, Apr. 5, 1973; 40 FR 54245, Nov. 21, 1975; 53 FR 46607, Nov. 18, 1988; 59 FR 62585, Dec. 6, 1994; 69 FR 46435, Aug. 3, 2004; 73 FR 1076, Jan. 7, 2008]

§ 3.808 Automobiles or other conveyances and adaptive equipment; certification.

(a) *Entitlement.* A certificate of eligibility for financial assistance in the purchase of one automobile or other conveyance in an amount not exceeding the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 3902 (including all State, local, and other taxes where such are applicable and included in the purchase price) and of basic entitlement to necessary adaptive equipment will be provided to—

(1) A veteran who is entitled to compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for a disability described in paragraph (b) of this section; or

(2) A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who has a disability described in paragraph (b) of this section that is the result of an injury or disability incurred or disease contracted in or aggravated by active military, naval, or air service.

(b) *Disability.* One of the following must exist:

(1) Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet;

(2) Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands;

(3) Permanent impairment of vision of both eyes: Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20° in the better eye.

(4) Severe burn injury: Deep partial thickness or full thickness burns resulting in scar formation that cause contractures and limit motion of one or more extremities or the trunk and preclude effective operation of an automobile.

(5) Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

(6) For adaptive equipment eligibility only, ankylosis of one or both knees or one or both hips.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3901, 3902)

(c) *Claim for conveyance and certification for adaptive equipment.* A specific application for financial assistance in purchasing a conveyance is required which must contain a certification by the claimant that the conveyance will be operated only by persons properly licensed. The application will also be considered as an application for the adaptive equipment to insure that the claimant will be able to operate the conveyance in a manner consistent with safety and to satisfy the applicable standards of licensure of the proper licensing authorities. Simultaneously with the certification provided pursuant to the introductory text of this section, a claimant for financial assistance in the purchase of an automobile will be furnished a certificate of eligibility for financial assistance in the purchase of such adaptive equipment as may be appropriate to the claimant's losses unless the need for such equipment is contraindicated by a physical or legal inability to operate the vehicle. There is no time limitation in which to apply. An application by a claimant on active duty will be deemed to have been filed with VA on the date

it is shown to have been placed in the hands of military authority for transmittal.

(d) *Additional eligibility criteria for adaptive equipment.* Claimants for adaptive equipment must also satisfy the additional eligibility criteria of §§ 17.156, 17.157, and 17.158 of this chapter.

(e) *Definition.* The term *adaptive equipment*, means generally, that equipment which must be part of or added to a conveyance manufactured for sale to the general public to make it safe for use by the claimant and to assist him or her in meeting the applicable standards of licensure of the proper licensing authority.

(1) With regard to automobiles and similar vehicles the term includes a basic automatic transmission as to a claimant who has lost or lost the use of a limb. In addition, the term includes, but is not limited to, power steering, power brakes, power window lifts and power seats. The term also includes air-conditioning equipment when such equipment is necessary to the health and safety of the veteran and to the safety of others, and special equipment necessary to assist the eligible person into or out of the automobile or other conveyance, regardless of whether the automobile or other conveyance is to be operated by the eligible person or is to be operated for such person by another person; and any modification of the interior space of the automobile or other conveyance if needed because of the physical condition of such person in order for such person to enter or operate the vehicle.

(2) With regard to automobiles and similar vehicles the term includes such items of equipment as the Chief Medical Director may, by directive, specify as ordinarily necessary for any of the classes of losses specified in paragraph (b) of this section and for any combination of such losses. Such specifications of equipment may include a limit on the financial assistance to be provided based on judgment and experience.

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(3) The term also includes other equipment which the Chief Medical Director or designee may deem necessary in an individual case.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1151(c)(2), 3902))

[36 FR 7588, Apr. 22, 1971, as amended at 38 FR 14370, June 1, 1973; 40 FR 37037, Aug. 25, 1975; 43 FR 4423, Feb. 2, 1978; 47 FR 24552, June 7, 1982; 53 FR 46607, Nov. 18, 1988; 66 FR 44528, Aug. 24, 2001; 71 FR 44919, Aug. 8, 2006; 78 FR 57487, Sept. 19, 2013; 80 FR 10003, Feb. 25, 2015]

§ 3.809 Specially adapted housing under 38 U.S.C. 2101(a)(2)(A)(i).

In order for a certificate of eligibility for assistance in acquiring specially adapted housing under 38 U.S.C. 2101(a)(2)(A)(i) or 2101A(a) to be extended to a veteran or a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty, the following requirements must be met:

(a) *General.* A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty must have a disability rated as permanent and total that was incurred or aggravated in line of duty in active military, naval, or air service. A veteran must be entitled to compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for a disability rated as permanent and total.

(b) *Disability.* The disability must be due to:

(1) The loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair,

(2) Blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus the anatomical loss or loss of use of one lower extremity,

(3) The loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with residuals of organic disease or injury which so affect the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair,

(4) The loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity which so affect the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair,

(5) The loss or loss of use of both upper extremities such as to preclude use of the arms at or above the elbow, or

(6) Full thickness or subdermal burns that have resulted in contractures with limitation of motion of two or more extremities or of at least one extremity and the trunk.

(c) *Preclude locomotion.* This term means the necessity for regular and constant use of a wheelchair, braces, crutches or canes as a normal mode of locomotion although occasional locomotion by other methods may be possible.

(d) *Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.* VA considers § 3.809(b) satisfied if the veteran or member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty has service-connected amyotrophic lateral sclerosis rated 100 percent disabling under 38 CFR 4.124a, diagnostic code 8017.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1151(c)(1), 2101, 2101A)

Cross Reference: Assistance to certain disabled veterans in acquiring specially adapted housing. See §§ 36.4400 through 36.4410 of this chapter.

[78 FR 72576, Dec. 3, 2013]

§ 3.809a Special home adaptation grants under 38 U.S.C. 2101(b).

A certificate of eligibility for assistance in acquiring necessary special home adaptations, or, on or after October 28, 1986, for assistance in acquiring a residence already adapted with necessary special features, under 38 U.S.C. 2101(b) or 2101A(a) may be issued to a veteran who served after April 20, 1898, or to a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who is eligible for the benefit under this section on or after December 16, 2003, if the following requirements are met:

(a) The member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty or veteran is not entitled to a certificate of eligibility for assistance in acquiring specially adapted housing under § 3.809 nor had the member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty or veteran previously received assistance in acquiring specially adapted housing under 38 U.S.C. 2101(a). A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty or veteran who first establishes entitlement

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under this section and who later becomes eligible for a certificate of eligibility under §3.809 may be issued a certificate of eligibility under §3.809.

(b) A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty must have a disability that was incurred or aggravated in line of duty in active military, naval, or air service and meets the requirements described in either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section. A veteran must be entitled to compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for a disability that meets the requirements described in either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section.

(1) VA has rated the disability as permanently and totally disabling and it:

(i) Includes the anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands;

(ii) Is due to deep partial thickness burns that have resulted in contracture(s) with limitation of motion of two or more extremities or of at least one extremity and the trunk;

(iii) Is due to full thickness or subdermal burns that have resulted in contracture(s) with limitation of motion of one or more extremities or the trunk; or

(iv) Is due to residuals of an inhalation injury (including, but not limited to, pulmonary fibrosis, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

(2) The disability is due to blindness in both eyes, having central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a standard correcting lens. For the purposes of this paragraph, an eye with a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less. The disability discussed in this paragraph need not be rated as permanently and totally disabling.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151(c)(1), 2101, 2101A, 2104)

CROSS REFERENCE: Assistance to certain disabled veterans in acquiring specially

adapted housing. See §§36.4400 through 36.4410 of this chapter.

[46 FR 47543, Sept. 29, 1981, as amended at 53 FR 23237, June 21, 1988; 75 FR 57861, Sept. 23, 2010; 79 FR 54609, Sept. 12, 2014]

§3.810 Clothing allowance.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, a veteran who has a service-connected disability, or a disability compensable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 as if it were service connected, is entitled, upon application therefore, to an annual clothing allowance, which is payable in a lump sum, as specified in this paragraph.

(1) *One clothing allowance.* A veteran is entitled to one annual clothing allowance if—

(i) A VA examination or a hospital or examination report from a facility specified in §3.326(b) establishes that the veteran, because of a service-connected disability or disabilities due to loss or loss of use of a hand or foot compensable at a rate specified in §3.350(a), (b), (c), (d), or (f), wears or uses one qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair) which tends to wear or tear clothing; or

(ii) The Under Secretary for Health or a designee certifies that—

(A) A veteran, because of a service-connected disability or disabilities, wears or uses one qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair) which tends to wear or tear clothing; or

(B) A veteran uses medication prescribed by a physician for one skin condition, which is due to a service-connected disability, that causes irreparable damage to the veteran's outer garments.

(2) *More than one clothing allowance; multiple types of garments affected.* A veteran is entitled to an annual clothing allowance for each prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair) or medication used by the veteran if each appliance or medication—

(i) Satisfies the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section; and

(ii) Affects a distinct type of article of clothing or outer garment.

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(3) *Two clothing allowances; single type of garment affected.* A veteran is entitled to two annual clothing allowances if a veteran uses more than one prosthetic or orthopedic appliance, (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair), medication for more than one skin condition, or an appliance and a medication, and the appliance(s) or medication(s)—

(i) Each satisfy the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section; and

(ii) Together tend to wear or tear a single type of article of clothing or irreparably damage a type of outer garment at an increased rate of damage to the clothing or outer garment due to a second appliance or medication.

(b) Effective August 1, 1972, the initial lump sum clothing allowance is due and payable for veterans meeting the eligibility requirements of paragraph (a) of this section as of that date. Subsequent annual payments for those meeting the eligibility requirements of paragraphs (a) of this section will become due on the anniversary date thereafter, both as to initial claims and recurring payments under previously established entitlement.

(c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the application for clothing allowance must be filed within 1 year of the anniversary date (August 1) for which entitlement is initially established, otherwise, the application will be acceptable only to effect payment of the clothing allowance becoming due on any succeeding anniversary date for which entitlement is established, provided the application is filed within 1 year of such date. The 1-year period for filing application will include the anniversary date and terminate on July 31 of the following year.

(2) Where the initial determination of service connection for the qualifying disability is made subsequent to an anniversary date for which entitlement is established, the application for clothing allowance may be filed within 1 year from the date of notification to the veteran of such determination.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1162)

(d) If a veteran is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institu-

tion for a period of more than 60 days and is furnished clothing without charge by the institution, VA shall reduce the amount of the annual clothing allowance by 1/365th of the amount otherwise payable for each day the veteran was incarcerated during the 12-month period preceding the anniversary date for which entitlement is established. No reduction shall be made for the first 60 days of incarceration.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5313A)

[37 FR 19134, Sept. 19, 1972, as amended at 39 FR 2362, Jan. 21, 1974; 49 FR 28242, July 11, 1984; 56 FR 5756, Feb. 13, 1991; 62 FR 35422, July 1, 1997; 76 FR 70885, Nov. 16, 2011; 77 FR 34218, June 11, 2012]

§3.811 Minimum income annuity and gratuitous annuity.

(a) *Eligibility for minimum income annuity.* The minimum income annuity authorized by Public Law 92-425 as amended is payable to a person:

(1) Whom the Department of Defense or the Department of Transportation has determined meets the eligibility criteria of section 4(a) of Pub. L. 92-425 as amended other than section 4(a)(1) and (2); and

(2) Who is eligible for pension under subchapter III of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, or section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978; and

(3) Whose annual income, as determined in establishing pension eligibility, is less than the maximum annual rate of pension in effect under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b).

(b) *Computation of the minimum income annuity payment—*(1) *Annual income.* VA will determine a beneficiary's annual income for minimum income annuity purposes under the provisions of §§3.271 and 3.272 of this part for beneficiaries receiving improved pension, or under §§3.260 through 3.262 of this part for beneficiaries receiving old law or section 306 pensions, except that the amount of the minimum income annuity will be excluded from the calculation.

(2) VA will determine the minimum income annuity payment for beneficiaries entitled to improved pension by subtracting the annual income for minimum income annuity purposes

from the maximum annual pension rate under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b).

(3) VA will determine the minimum income annuity payment for beneficiaries receiving old law and section 306 pensions by reducing the maximum annual pension rate under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b) by the amount of the Retired Servicemen's Family Protection Plan benefit, if any, that the beneficiary receives and subtracting from that amount the annual income for minimum income annuity purposes.

(4) VA will recompute the monthly minimum income annuity payment whenever there is a change to the maximum annual rate of pension in effect under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b), and whenever there is a change in the beneficiary's income.

(c) An individual otherwise eligible for pension under subchapter III of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, or section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978 shall be considered eligible for pension for purposes of determining eligibility for the minimum income annuity even though as a result of adding the amount of the minimum income annuity authorized under Public Law 92-425 as amended to any other countable income, no amount of pension is due.

(d) If the Department of Defense or the Department of Transportation determines that a minimum income annuitant also is entitled to the gratuitous annuity authorized by Pub. L. 100-456 as amended, which is payable to certain surviving spouses of servicemembers who died before November 1, 1953, and were entitled to retired or retainer pay on the date of death, VA will combine the payment of the gratuitous annuity with the minimum income annuity payment.

(e) *Termination.* Other than as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, if a beneficiary receiving the minimum income annuity becomes ineligible for pension, VA will terminate the minimum income annuity effective the same date.

(Authority: Sec. 4, Pub. L. 92-425, 86 Stat. 706, 712, as amended (10 U.S.C. 1448 note))

[63 FR 412, Jan. 6, 1998, as amended at 63 FR 62943, Nov. 10, 1998]

§ 3.812 Special allowance payable under section 156 of Pub. L. 97-377.

The provisions of this section apply to the payment of a special allowance to certain surviving spouses and children of individuals who died on active duty prior to August 13, 1981, or who died as a result of a service-connected disability which was incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981. This special allowance is a replacement for certain social security benefits which were either reduced or terminated by provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

(a) *Eligibility requirements.* (1) A determination must first be made that the person on whose earnings record the claim is based either died on active duty prior to August 13, 1981, or died as a result of a service-connected disability which was incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981. For purposes of this determination, character of discharge is not a factor for consideration, and death on active duty subsequent to August 12, 1981, is qualifying provided that the death resulted from a service-connected disability which was incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981.

(2) Once a favorable determination has been made under paragraph (a)(1) of this section, determinations as to the age, relationship and school attendance requirements contained in paragraphs (a)(1) and (b)(1) of section 156 of Pub. L. 97-377 will be made. In making these eligibility determinations VA shall apply the provisions of the Social Security Act, and any regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, as in effect during the claimant's period of eligibility. Unless otherwise provided in this section, when issues are raised concerning eligibility or entitlement to this special allowance which cannot be appropriately resolved under the provisions of the Social Security Act, or the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, the provisions of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, are for application.

(b) *Computation of payment rate—(1) Basic entitlement rate.* A basic entitlement rate will be computed for each eligible claimant in accordance with the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(2) and (b)(2) of section 156 of Pub. L. 97-377

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using data to be provided by the Social Security Administration. This basic entitlement rate will then be used to compute the monthly payment rate as described in paragraphs (b)(2) to (b)(6) of this section.

(2) *Original or reopened awards to surviving spouses.* The monthly payment rate shall be equal to the basic entitlement rate increased by the overall average percentage (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) of each legislative increase in dependency and indemnity compensation rates under 38 U.S.C. 1311 which became effective concurrently with or subsequent to the effective date of the earliest adjustment under section 215(i) of the Social Security Act that was disregarded in computing the basic entitlement rate.

(3) *Original and reopened awards to children.* The monthly payment rate shall be equal to the basic entitlement rate increased by the overall average percentage (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) of each legislative increase in the rates of educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. 3531(b) which became effective concurrently with or subsequent to the effective date of the earliest adjustment under section 215(i) of the Social Security Act that was disregarded in computing the basic entitlement rate.

(4) *Subsequent legislative increases in rates.* The monthly rate of special allowance payable to a surviving spouse shall be increased by the same overall average percentage increase (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) and on the same effective date as any legislative increase in the rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 1311. The monthly rate of special allowance payable to a child shall be increased by the same overall average percentage increase (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) and on the same effective date as any legislative increase in the rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 3531(b).

(5) *Amendment of awards.* Prompt action shall be taken to amend any award of this special allowance to conform with evidence indicating a change in basic eligibility, any basic entitlement rate, or any effective date previously determined. It is the claimant's responsibility to promptly notify VA of any change in their status or employ-

ment which affects eligibility or entitlement.

(6) *Rounding of monthly rates.* Any monthly rate computed under the provisions of this paragraph, if not a multiple of \$1, shall be rounded to the next lower multiple of \$1.

(c) *Claimants not entitled to this special allowance.* The following are not entitled to this special allowance for the reasons indicated.

(1) Claimants eligible for death benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151. The deaths in such cases are not service-connected.

(2) Claimants eligible for death benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1318. The deaths in such cases are not service connected.

(3) Claimants whose claims are based on an individual's service in:

(i) The Commonwealth Army of the Philippines while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including recognized guerrilla forces (see 38 U.S.C. 107).

(ii) The Philippine Scouts under section 14, Pub. L. 190, 79th Congress (see 38 U.S.C. 107).

(iii) The commissioned corps of the Public Health Service (specifically excluded by section 156 of Pub. L. 97-377), or

(iv) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (specifically excluded by section 156 of Pub. L. 97-377).

(d) *Appellate jurisdiction.* VA shall have appellate jurisdiction of all determinations made in connection with this special allowance.

(e) *Claims.* Claimants must file or submit a complete claim on a paper or electronic form prescribed by the Secretary in order for VA to pay this special allowance. When VA receives an intent to file a claim or inquiries as to eligibility, VA will follow the procedures outlined in §3.155. Otherwise, the date of receipt of the complete claim will be accepted as the date of claim for this special allowance. See §§3.150, 3.151, 3.155, 3.400.

(f) *Retroactivity and effective dates.* There is no time limit for filing a claim for this special allowance. Upon the filing of a complete claim, benefits shall be payable for all periods of eligibility beginning on or after the first

day of the month in which the claimant first became eligible for this special allowance, except that no payment may be made for any period prior to January 1, 1983.

(Authority: Sec. 156, Pub. L. 97-377, 96 Stat. 1830, 1920 (1982))

[49 FR 21709, May 23, 1984, as amended at 54 FR 26030, June 21, 1989; 60 FR 20643, Apr. 27, 1995; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014]

§3.813 Interim benefits for disability or death due to chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda.

(a) *Disability benefits.* Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, a veteran who served in the active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, and who suffers from chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda which became manifest within one year after the date of the veteran's most recent departure from the Republic of Vietnam during such service, shall be paid interim disability benefits under this section in the same manner and to the same extent that compensation would be payable if such disabilities were service-connected.

(b) *Death benefits.* Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, if a veteran described in paragraph (a) of this section dies as a result of chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda, the veteran's survivors shall be paid interim death benefits under this section based upon the same eligibility requirements and at the same rates that dependency and indemnity compensation would be payable if the death were service-connected.

(c) *Exceptions.* Benefits under this section are not payable for any month for which compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation is payable for the same disability or death, nor are benefits payable under this section (1) when there is affirmative evidence that the disease was not incurred by the veteran during service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, (2) when there is affirmative evidence to establish that an intercurrent injury or disease, which is a recognized cause of the disease for which benefits are being claimed, was suffered by the veteran between the date of the veteran's most recent departure from the

Republic of Vietnam during active military, naval or air service and the onset of the claimed disease, or (3) if it is determined, based on evidence in the veteran's service records and other records provided by the Secretary of Defense, that the veteran was not exposed to dioxin during active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era.

(d) *Similarity to service-connected benefits.* For purposes of all laws administered by VA (except chapters 11 and 13 of title 38 U.S.C.), a disease establishing eligibility for disability or death benefits under this section shall be treated as if it were service-connected, and the receipt of disability or death benefits shall be treated as if such benefits were compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, respectively.

(e) *Effective dates.* Benefits under this section may not be paid for any period prior to October 1, 1984, nor for any period after September 30, 1986.

(Authority: Pub. L. 98-542)

[50 FR 34460, Aug. 26, 1985]

§3.814 Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual suffering from spina bifida whose biological father or mother is or was a Vietnam veteran or a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(a) *Monthly monetary allowance.* VA will pay a monthly monetary allowance under subchapter I of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18, based upon the level of disability determined under the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, to or for a person who VA has determined is an individual suffering from spina bifida whose biological mother or father is or was a Vietnam veteran or a veteran with covered service in Korea. Receipt of this allowance will not affect the right of the individual or any related person to receive any other benefit to which he or she may be entitled under any law administered by VA. An individual suffering from spina bifida is entitled to only one monthly allowance under this section, even if the individual's biological father and mother are or were both Vietnam veterans or veterans with covered service in Korea.

(b) [Reserved]

(c) *Definitions*—(1) *Vietnam veteran*. For the purposes of this section, the term “Vietnam veteran” means a person who performed active military, naval, or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, without regard to the characterization of the person’s service. *Service in the Republic of Vietnam* includes service in the waters offshore and service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam.

(2) *Covered service in Korea*. For the purposes of this section, the term “veteran with covered service in Korea” means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service in or near the Korean DMZ between September 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971, and who is determined by VA, in consultation with the Department of Defense, to have been exposed to an herbicide agent during such service. Exposure to an herbicide agent will be conceded if the veteran served between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971, in a unit that, as determined by the Department of Defense, operated in or near the Korean DMZ in an area in which herbicides are known to have been applied during that period, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent during that service.

(3) *Individual*. For the purposes of this section, the term “individual” means a person, regardless of age or marital status, whose biological father or mother is or was a Vietnam veteran and who was conceived after the date on which the veteran first served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, or whose biological father or mother is or was a veteran with covered service in Korea and who was conceived after the date on which the veteran first had covered service in Korea as defined in this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of §3.204(a)(1), VA will require the types of evidence specified in §§3.209 and 3.210 sufficient to establish in the judgment of the Secretary that a person is the biological son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran or a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(4) *Spina bifida*. For the purposes of this section, the term “spina bifida” means any form and manifestation of spina bifida except spina bifida occulta.

(d) *Disability evaluations*. (1) Except as otherwise specified in this paragraph, VA will determine the level of payment as follows:

(i) *Level I*. The individual walks without braces or other external support as his or her primary means of mobility in the community, has no sensory or motor impairment of the upper extremities, has an IQ of 90 or higher, and is continent of urine and feces without the use of medication or other means to control incontinence.

(ii) *Level II*. Provided that none of the disabilities is severe enough to warrant payment at Level III, and the individual: walks with braces or other external support as his or her primary means of mobility in the community; or, has sensory or motor impairment of the upper extremities, but is able to grasp pen, feed self, and perform self care; or, has an IQ of at least 70 but less than 90; or, requires medication or other means to control the effects of urinary bladder impairment and no more than two times per week is unable to remain dry for at least three hours at a time during waking hours; or, requires bowel management techniques or other treatment to control the effects of bowel impairment but does not have fecal leakage severe or frequent enough to require wearing of absorbent materials at least four days a week; or, has a colostomy that does not require wearing a bag.

(iii) *Level III*. The individual uses a wheelchair as his or her primary means of mobility in the community; or, has sensory or motor impairment of the upper extremities severe enough to prevent grasping a pen, feeding self, and performing self care; or, has an IQ of 69 or less; or, despite the use of medication or other means to control the effects of urinary bladder impairment, at least three times per week is unable to remain dry for three hours at a time during waking hours; or, despite bowel management techniques or other treatment to control the effects of bowel impairment, has fecal leakage severe or frequent enough to require wearing of absorbent materials at least four

days a week; or, regularly requires manual evacuation or digital stimulation to empty the bowel; or, has a colostomy that requires wearing a bag.

(2) If an individual who would otherwise be paid at Level I or II has one or more disabilities, such as blindness, uncontrolled seizures, or renal failure that result either from spina bifida, or from treatment procedures for spina bifida, the Director of the Compensation Service may increase the monthly payment to the level that, in his or her judgment, best represents the extent to which the disabilities resulting from spina bifida limit the individual's ability to engage in ordinary day-to-day activities, including activities outside the home. A Level II or Level III payment will be awarded depending on whether the effects of a disability are of equivalent severity to the effects specified under Level II or Level III.

(3) VA may accept statements from private physicians, or examination reports from government or private institutions, for the purpose of rating spina bifida claims without further examination, provided the statements or reports are adequate for assessing the level of disability due to spina bifida under the provisions of paragraph (d)(1) of this section. In the absence of adequate medical information, VA will schedule an examination for the purpose of assessing the level of disability.

(4) VA will pay an individual eligible for a monetary allowance due to spina bifida at Level I unless or until it receives medical evidence supporting a higher payment. When required to reassess the level of disability under paragraph (d)(5) or (d)(6) of this section, VA will pay an individual eligible for this monetary allowance at Level I in the absence of evidence adequate to support a higher level of disability or if the individual fails to report, without good cause, for a scheduled examination. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, the illness or hospitalization of the claimant, death of an immediate family member, etc.

(5) VA will pay individuals under the age of one year at Level I unless a pediatric neurologist or a pediatric neurosurgeon certifies that, in his or her medical judgment, there is a neurological deficit that will prevent the in-

dividual from ambulating, grasping a pen, feeding himself or herself, performing self care, or from achieving urinary or fecal continence. If any of those deficits are present, VA will pay the individual at Level III. In either case, VA will reassess the level of disability when the individual reaches the age of one year.

(6) VA will reassess the level of payment whenever it receives medical evidence indicating that a change is warranted. For individuals between the ages of one and twenty-one, however, it must reassess the level of payment at least every five years.

(e) *Effective dates.* Except as otherwise provided, VA will award the monetary allowance for an individual suffering from spina bifida based on an initial claim or supplemental claim as of the date VA received the claim (or the date of birth if the claim is received within 1 year of that date) or the date entitlement arose, whichever is later.

(1) VA will increase benefits as of the earliest date the evidence establishes that the level of severity increased, but only if the beneficiary applies for an increase within one year of that date.

(2) If a claimant reopens a previously disallowed claim based on corrected military records, VA will award the benefit from the latest of the following dates: the date the veteran or beneficiary applied for a correction of the military records; the date the disallowed claim was filed; or, the date one year before the date of receipt of the reopened claim.

(f) *Reductions and discontinuances.* VA will generally reduce or discontinue awards according to the facts found except as provided in §§3.105 and 3.114(b).

(1) If benefits were paid erroneously because of beneficiary error, VA will reduce or discontinue benefits as of the effective date of the erroneous award.

(2) If benefits were paid erroneously because of administrative error, VA will reduce or discontinue benefits as of the date of last payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1805, 1811, 1812, 1821, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 5101, 5110, 5111, 5112)

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CROSS REFERENCE: 38 CFR 3.307(a)(6)(iv).

[62 FR 51279, Sept. 30, 1997, as amended at 65 FR 35282, June 2, 2000; 66 FR 13436, Mar. 6, 2001; 67 FR 49587, July 31, 2002; 76 FR 4249, Jan. 25, 2011; 79 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014; 84 FR 171, Jan. 18, 2019]

§3.815 Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual with disability from covered birth defects whose biological mother is or was a Vietnam veteran; identification of covered birth defects.

(a) *Monthly monetary allowance*—(1) *General.* VA will pay a monthly monetary allowance under subchapter II of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 to or for an individual whose biological mother is or was a Vietnam veteran and who VA has determined to have disability resulting from one or more covered birth defects. Except as provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, the amount of the monetary allowance paid will be based upon the level of such disability suffered by the individual, as determined in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) *Affirmative evidence of cause other than mother's service during Vietnam era.* No monetary allowance will be provided under this section based on a particular birth defect of an individual in any case where affirmative evidence establishes that the birth defect results from a cause other than the active military, naval, or air service of the individual's mother during the Vietnam era and, in determining the level of disability for an individual with more than one birth defect, the particular defect resulting from other causes will be excluded from consideration. This will not prevent VA from paying a monetary allowance under this section for other birth defects.

(3) *Nonduplication; spina bifida.* In the case of an individual whose only covered birth defect is spina bifida, a monetary allowance will be paid under §3.814, and not under this section, nor will the individual be evaluated for disability under this section. In the case of an individual who has spina bifida and one or more additional covered birth defects, a monetary allowance will be paid under this section and the amount of the monetary allowance will be not less than the amount the individual would receive if his or her only

covered birth defect were spina bifida. If, but for the individual's one or more additional covered birth defects, the monetary allowance payable to or for the individual would be based on an evaluation at Level I, II, or III, respectively, under §3.814(d), the evaluation of the individual's level of disability under paragraph (e) of this section will be not less than Level II, III, or IV, respectively.

(b) *No effect on other VA benefits.* Receipt of a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 will not affect the right of the individual, or the right of any person based on the individual's relationship to that person, to receive any other benefit to which the individual, or that person, may be entitled under any law administered by VA.

(c) *Definitions*—(1) *Vietnam veteran.* For the purposes of this section, the term *Vietnam veteran* means a person who performed active military, naval, or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, without regard to the characterization of the person's service. Service in the Republic of Vietnam includes service in the waters offshore and service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam.

(2) *Individual.* For the purposes of this section, the term *individual* means a person, regardless of age or marital status, whose biological mother is or was a Vietnam veteran and who was conceived after the date on which the veteran first entered the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975. Notwithstanding the provisions of §3.204(a)(1), VA will require the types of evidence specified in §§3.209 and 3.210 sufficient to establish that a person is the biological son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran.

(3) *Covered birth defect.* For the purposes of this section, the term *covered birth defect* means any birth defect identified by VA as a birth defect that is associated with the service of women Vietnam veterans in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, and that has resulted, or may result, in permanent physical or

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mental disability. However, the term *covered birth defect* does not include a condition due to a:

- (i) Familial disorder;
- (ii) Birth-related injury; or
- (iii) Fetal or neonatal infirmity with well-established causes.

(d) *Identification of covered birth defects.* All birth defects that are not excluded under the provisions of this paragraph are covered birth defects.

(1) Covered birth defects include, but are not limited to, the following (however, if a birth defect is determined to be familial in a particular family, it will not be a covered birth defect):

- (i) Achondroplasia;
- (ii) Cleft lip and cleft palate;
- (iii) Congenital heart disease;
- (iv) Congenital talipes equinovarus (clubfoot);
- (v) Esophageal and intestinal atresia;
- (vi) Hallerman-Streiff syndrome;
- (vii) Hip dysplasia;
- (viii) Hirschprung's disease (congenital megacolon);
- (ix) Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis;
- (x) Hypospadias;
- (xi) Imperforate anus;
- (xii) Neural tube defects (including spina bifida, encephalocele, and anencephaly);
- (xiii) Poland syndrome;
- (xiv) Pyloric stenosis;
- (xv) Syndactyly (fused digits);
- (xvi) Tracheoesophageal fistula;
- (xvii) Undescended testicle; and
- (xviii) Williams syndrome.

(2) Birth defects that are familial disorders, including hereditary genetic conditions, are not covered birth defects. Familial disorders include, but are not limited to, the following, unless the birth defect is not familial in a particular family:

- (i) Albinism;
- (ii) Alpha-antitrypsin deficiency;
- (iii) Crouzon syndrome;
- (iv) Cystic fibrosis;
- (v) Duchenne's muscular dystrophy;
- (vi) Galactosemia;
- (vii) Hemophilia;
- (viii) Huntington's disease;
- (ix) Hurler syndrome;
- (x) Kartagener's syndrome (Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia);
- (xi) Marfan syndrome;
- (xii) Neurofibromatosis;

- (xiii) Osteogenesis imperfecta;
- (xiv) Pectus excavatum;
- (xv) Phenylketonuria;
- (xvi) Sickle cell disease;
- (xvii) Tay-Sachs disease;
- (xviii) Thalassemia; and
- (xix) Wilson's disease.

(3) Conditions that are congenital malignant neoplasms are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) Medulloblastoma;
- (ii) Neuroblastoma;
- (iii) Retinoblastoma;
- (iv) Teratoma; and
- (v) Wilm's tumor.

(4) Conditions that are chromosomal disorders are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) Down syndrome and other Trisomies;
- (ii) Fragile X syndrome;
- (iii) Klinefelter's syndrome; and
- (iv) Turner's syndrome.

(5) Conditions that are due to birth-related injury are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) Brain damage due to anoxia during or around time of birth;
- (ii) Cerebral palsy due to birth trauma, (iii) Facial nerve palsy or other peripheral nerve injury;
- (iv) Fractured clavicle; and
- (v) Horner's syndrome due to forceful manipulation during birth.

(6) Conditions that are due to a fetal or neonatal infirmity with well-established causes or that are miscellaneous pediatric conditions are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) Asthma and other allergies;
- (ii) Effects of maternal infection during pregnancy, including but not limited to, maternal rubella, toxoplasmosis, or syphilis;
- (iii) Fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal effects of maternal drug use;
- (iv) Hyaline membrane disease;
- (v) Maternal-infant blood incompatibility;
- (vi) Neonatal infections;
- (vii) Neonatal jaundice;
- (viii) Post-infancy deafness/hearing impairment (onset after the age of one year);
- (ix) Prematurity; and

(x) Refractive disorders of the eye.
 (7) Conditions that are developmental disorders are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) Attention deficit disorder;
- (ii) Autism;
- (iii) Epilepsy diagnosed after infancy (after the age of one year);
- (iv) Learning disorders; and
- (v) Mental retardation (unless part of a syndrome that is a covered birth defect).

(8) Conditions that do not result in permanent physical or mental disability are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Conditions rendered non-disabling through treatment;
- (ii) Congenital heart problems surgically corrected or resolved without disabling residuals;
- (iii) Heart murmurs unassociated with a diagnosed cardiac abnormality;
- (iv) Hemangiomas that have resolved with or without treatment; and
- (v) Scars (other than of the head, face, or neck) as the only residual of corrective surgery for birth defects.

(e) *Disability evaluations.* Whenever VA determines, upon receipt of competent medical evidence, that an individual has one or more covered birth defects, VA will determine the level of disability currently resulting, in combination, from the covered birth defects and associated disabilities. No monetary allowance will be payable under this section if VA determines under this paragraph that an individual has no current disability resulting from the covered birth defects, unless VA determines that the provisions of paragraph (a)(3) of this section are for application. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, VA will determine the level of disability as follows:

(1) *Levels of disability.*

(i) *Level 0.* The individual has no current disability resulting from covered birth defects.

(ii) *Level I.* The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:

(A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that only occasionally or intermittently limit or prevent some daily activities; or

(B) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck without gross distortion or gross asymmetry of any facial feature (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(iii) *Level II.* The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:

(A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that frequently or constantly limit or prevent some daily activities, but the individual is able to work or attend school, carry out most household chores, travel, and provide age-appropriate self-care, such as eating, dressing, grooming, and carrying out personal hygiene, and communication, behavior, social interaction, and intellectual functioning are appropriate for age; or

(B) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck with either gross distortion or gross asymmetry of one facial feature or one paired set of facial features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(iv) *Level III.* The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:

(A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that frequently or constantly limit or prevent most daily activities, but the individual is able to provide age-appropriate self-care, such as eating, dressing, grooming, and carrying out personal hygiene;

(B) The individual is unable to work or attend school, travel, or carry out household chores, or does so intermittently and with difficulty;

(C) The individual's communication, behavior, social interaction, and intellectual functioning are not entirely appropriate for age; or

(D) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck with either gross distortion or gross asymmetry of two facial features or two paired sets of facial features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(v) *Level IV.* The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:

(A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that prevent age-appropriate self-care, such as eating, dressing, grooming, and carrying out personal hygiene;

(B) The individual's communication, behavior, social interaction, and intellectual functioning are grossly inappropriate for age; or

(C) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck with either gross distortion or gross asymmetry of three facial features or three paired sets of facial features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(2) *Assessing limitation of daily activities.* Physical or mental effects on the following functions are to be considered in assessing limitation of daily activities:

(i) Mobility (ability to stand and walk, including balance and coordination);

(ii) Manual dexterity;

(iii) Stamina;

(iv) Speech;

(v) Hearing;

(vi) Vision (other than correctable refraction errors);

(vii) Memory;

(viii) Ability to concentrate;

(ix) Appropriateness of behavior; and

(x) Urinary and fecal continence.

(f) *Information for determining whether individuals have covered birth defects and rating disability levels.* (1) VA may accept statements from private physicians, or examination reports from government or private institutions, for the purposes of determining whether an individual has a covered birth defect and for rating claims for covered birth defects. If they are adequate for such purposes, VA may make the determination and rating without further examination. In the absence of adequate information, VA may schedule examinations for the purpose of determining whether an individual has a covered birth defect and/or assessing the level of disability.

(2) Except in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of this section, VA will not pay a monthly monetary allowance unless or until VA is able to obtain medical evidence adequate to determine that an individual has a covered birth defect and adequate to assess the level of disability due to covered birth defects.

(g) *Redeterminations.* VA will reassess a determination under this section

whenever it receives evidence indicating that a change is warranted.

(h) *Referrals.* If a regional office is unclear in any case as to whether a condition is a covered birth defect, it may refer the issue to the Director of the Compensation Service for determination.

(i) *Effective dates.* Except as provided in §3.114(a) or paragraph (i)(1) or (2) of this section, VA will award the monetary allowance under subchapter II of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18, for an individual with disability resulting from one or more covered birth defects, based on an initial claim or supplemental claim, as of the date VA received the claim (or the date of birth if the claim is received within one year of that date), the date entitlement arose, or December 1, 2001, whichever is latest. Subject to the condition that no benefits may be paid for any period prior to December 1, 2001:

(1) VA will increase benefits as of the earliest date the evidence establishes that the level of severity increased, but only if the beneficiary applies for an increase within one year of that date.

(2) If a claimant reopens a previously disallowed claim based on corrected military records, VA will award the benefit from the latest of the following dates: the date the veteran or beneficiary applied for a correction of the military records; the date the disallowed claim was filed; or, the date one year before the date of receipt of the reopened claim.

(j) *Reductions and discontinuances.* VA will generally reduce or discontinue awards under subchapter II of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 according to the facts found except as provided in §§3.105 and 3.114(b).

(1) If benefits were paid erroneously because of beneficiary error, VA will reduce or discontinue benefits as of the effective date of the erroneous award.

(2) If benefits were paid erroneously because of administrative error, VA will reduce or discontinue benefits as of the date of last payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 5101, 5110, 5111, 5112)

[67 FR 49588, July 31, 2002, as amended at 76 FR 4249, Jan. 25, 2011; 79 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014; 84 FR 171, Jan. 18, 2019]

§3.816 Awards under the Nehmer Court Orders for disability or death caused by a condition presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.

(a) *Purpose.* This section states effective-date rules required by orders of a United States district court in the class-action case of *Nehmer v. United States Department of Veterans Affairs*, No. CV-86-6160 TEH (N.D. Cal.).

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section—

(1) *Nehmer class member* means:

(i) A Vietnam veteran who has a covered herbicide disease; or

(ii) A surviving spouse, child, or parent of a deceased Vietnam veteran who died from a covered herbicide disease.

(2) *Covered herbicide disease* means a disease for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has established a presumption of service connection pursuant to the Agent Orange Act of 1991, Public Law 102-4, other than chloracne, as provided in §3.309(e).

(c) *Effective date of disability compensation.* If a *Nehmer* class member is entitled to disability compensation for a covered herbicide disease, the effective date of the award will be as follows:

(1) If VA denied compensation for the same covered herbicide disease in a decision issued between September 25, 1985 and May 3, 1989, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date VA received the claim on which the prior denial was based or the date the disability arose, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. A prior decision will be construed as having denied compensation for the same disease if the prior decision denied compensation for a disease that reasonably may be construed as the same covered herbicide disease for which compensation has been awarded. Minor differences in the terminology used in the prior decision will not preclude a finding, based on the record at the time of the prior decision, that the prior decision denied compensation for the same covered herbicide disease.

(2) If the class member's claim for disability compensation for the covered herbicide disease was either pending before VA on May 3, 1989, or was received by VA between that date and

the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the covered disease, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date such claim was received by VA or the date the disability arose, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. A claim will be considered a claim for compensation for a particular covered herbicide disease if:

(i) The claimant's application and other supporting statements and submissions may reasonably be viewed, under the standards ordinarily governing compensation claims, as indicating an intent to apply for compensation for the covered herbicide disability; or

(ii) VA issued a decision on the claim, between May 3, 1989 and the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the covered disease, in which VA denied compensation for a disease that reasonably may be construed as the same covered herbicide disease for which compensation has been awarded.

(3) If the class member's claim referred to in paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section was received within one year from the date of the class member's separation from service, the effective date of the award shall be the day following the date of the class member's separation from active service.

(4) If the requirements of paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section are not met, the effective date of the award shall be determined in accordance with §§3.114 and 3.400.

(d) *Effective date of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).* If a *Nehmer* class member is entitled to DIC for a death due to a covered herbicide disease, the effective date of the award will be as follows:

(1) If VA denied DIC for the death in a decision issued between September 25, 1985 and May 3, 1989, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date VA received the claim on which such prior denial was based or the date the death occurred, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(2) If the class member's claim for DIC for the death was either pending

before VA on May 3, 1989, or was received by VA between that date and the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the covered herbicide disease that caused the death, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date such claim was received by VA or the date the death occurred, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section. In accordance with §3.152(b)(1), a claim by a surviving spouse or child for death pension will be considered a claim for DIC. In all other cases, a claim will be considered a claim for DIC if the claimant's application and other supporting statements and submissions may reasonably be viewed, under the standards ordinarily governing DIC claims, as indicating an intent to apply for DIC.

(3) If the class member's claim referred to in paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section was received within one year from the date of the veteran's death, the effective date of the award shall be the first day of the month in which the death occurred.

(4) If the requirements of paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section are not met, the effective date of the award shall be determined in accordance with §§3.114 and 3.400.

(e) *Effect of other provisions affecting retroactive entitlement*—(1) *General*. If the requirements specified in paragraphs (c)(1) or (c)(2) or (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section are satisfied, the effective date shall be assigned as specified in those paragraphs, without regard to the provisions in 38 U.S.C. 5110(g) or §3.114 prohibiting payment for periods prior to the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for a covered herbicide disease. However, the provisions of this section will not apply if payment to a *Nehmer* class member based on a claim described in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section is otherwise prohibited by statute or regulation, as, for example, where a class member did not qualify as a surviving spouse at the time of the prior claim or denial.

(2) *Claims Based on Service in the Republic of Vietnam Prior to August 5, 1964*. If a claim referred to in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section was denied by VA

prior to January 1, 1997, and the veteran's service in the Republic of Vietnam ended before August 5, 1964, the effective-date rules of this regulation do not apply. The effective date of benefits in such cases shall be determined in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5110. If a claim referred to in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section was pending before VA on January 1, 1997, or was received by VA after that date, and the veteran's service in the Republic of Vietnam ended before August 5, 1964, the effective date shall be the later of the date provided by paragraph (c) or (d) of this section or January 1, 1997.

(Authority: Public Law 104-275, sec. 505)

(f) *Payment of Benefits to Survivors or Estates of Deceased Beneficiaries*—(1) *General*. If a *Nehmer* class member entitled to retroactive benefits pursuant to paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) or (d)(1) through (d)(3) of this section dies prior to receiving payment of any such benefits, VA shall pay such unpaid retroactive benefits to the first individual or entity listed below that is in existence at the time of payment:

(i) The class member's spouse, regardless of current marital status.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (f)(1)(i): For purposes of this paragraph, a spouse is the person who was legally married to the class member at the time of the class member's death.

(ii) The class member's child(ren), regardless of age or marital status (if more than one child exists, payment will be made in equal shares, accompanied by an explanation of the division).

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (f)(1)(ii): For purposes of this paragraph, the term "child" includes natural and adopted children, and also includes any stepchildren who were members of the class member's household at the time of the class member's death.

(iii) The class member's parent(s), regardless of dependency (if both parents are alive, payment will be made in equal shares, accompanied by an explanation of the division).

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (f)(1)(iii): For purposes of this paragraph, the term "parent" includes natural and adoptive parents, but in the event of successive parents, the persons who last stood as parents in relation to the class member will be considered the parents.

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(iv) The class member's estate.

(2) *Inapplicability of certain accrued benefit requirements.* The provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5121(c) and § 3.1000(c) requiring survivors to file claims for accrued benefits do not apply to payments under this section. When a *Nehmer* class member dies prior to receiving retroactive payments under this section, VA will pay the amount to an identified payee in accordance with paragraph (f)(1) of this section without requiring an application from the payee. Prior to releasing such payment, however, VA may ask the payee to provide further information as specified in paragraph (f)(3) of this section.

(3) *Identifying payees.* VA shall make reasonable efforts to identify the appropriate payee(s) under paragraph (f)(1) of this section based on information in the veteran's claims file. If further information is needed to determine whether any appropriate payee exists or whether there are any persons having equal or higher precedence than a known prospective payee, VA will request such information from a survivor or authorized representative if the claims file provides sufficient contact information. Before releasing payment to an identified payee, VA will ask the payee to state whether there are any other survivors of the class member who may have equal or greater entitlement to payment under this section, unless the circumstances clearly indicate that such a request is unnecessary. If, following such efforts, VA releases the full amount of unpaid benefits to a payee, VA may not thereafter pay any portion of such benefits to any other individual, unless VA is able to recover the payment previously released.

(4) *Bar to accrued benefit claims.* Payment of benefits pursuant to paragraph (f)(1) of this section shall bar a later claim by any individual for payment of all or any part of such benefits as accrued benefits under 38 U.S.C. 5121 and § 3.1000.

(g) *Awards covered by this section.* This section applies only to awards of disability compensation or DIC for disability or death caused by a disease

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listed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[68 FR 50970, Aug. 25, 2003, as amended at 73 FR 61736, Oct. 17, 2008; 78 FR 54766, Sept. 6, 2013]

FORFEITURE

§ 3.900 General.

(a) Forfeiture of benefits based on one period of service does not affect entitlement to benefits based on a period of service beginning after the offense causing the prior forfeiture.

(b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, any offense committed prior to January 1, 1959, may cause a forfeiture and any forfeiture in effect prior to January 1, 1959, will continue to be a bar on and after January 1, 1959.

(Authority: Section 3, Pub. L. 85-857)

(2) Effective September 2, 1959, forfeiture of benefits may not be declared except under the circumstances set forth in § 3.901(d), § 3.902(d), or § 3.903. Forfeitures declared before September 2, 1959, will continue to be a bar on and after that date.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(d) and 6105)

(c) Pension or compensation payments are not subject to forfeiture because of violation of hospital rules.

(d) When the person primarily entitled has forfeited his or her rights by reason of fraud or a treasonable act determination as to the rights of any dependents of record to benefits under § 3.901(c) or § 3.902(c) may be made upon receipt of an application.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(b) and 38 U.S.C. 6104(b))

[26 FR 1607, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 8590, Aug. 28, 1962; 53 FR 17934, May 19, 1988]

§ 3.901 Fraud.

(a) *Definition.* An act committed when a person knowingly makes or causes to be made or conspires, combines, aids, or assists in, agrees to, arranges for, or in any way procures the making or presentation of a false or fraudulent affidavit, declaration, certificate, statement, voucher, or paper,

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concerning any claim for benefits under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (except laws relating to insurance benefits).

(b) *Effect on claim.* For the purposes of paragraph (d) of this section, any person who commits fraud forfeits all rights to benefits under all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs other than laws relating to insurance benefits.

(c) *Forfeiture before September 2, 1959.* Where forfeiture for fraud was declared before September 2, 1959, in the case of a veteran entitled to disability compensation, the compensation payable except for the forfeiture may be paid to the veteran's spouse, children and parents provided the decision to apportion was authorized prior to September 2, 1959. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103)

(1) Service-connected death benefit payable.

(2) Amount of compensation payable but for the forfeiture.

No benefits are payable to any person who participated in the fraud causing the forfeiture.

(d) *Forfeiture after September 1, 1959.* After September 1, 1959, forfeiture by reason of fraud may be declared only

(1) Where the person was not residing or domiciled in a State as defined in § 3.1(i) at the time of commission of the fraudulent act; or

(2) Where the person ceased to be a resident of or domiciled in a State as defined in § 3.1(i) before expiration of the period during which criminal prosecution could be instituted; or

(3) The fraudulent act was committed in the Philippine Islands.

Where the veteran's rights have been forfeited, no part of his or her benefit may be paid to his or her dependents.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103)

(e) *Remission of forfeitures imposed prior to September 2, 1959.* Where it is determined that a forfeiture for fraud which was imposed prior to September 2, 1959, would not be imposed under the law and regulation in effect on and after September 2, 1959, the forfeiture

shall be remitted effective June 30, 1972. Benefits to which a person becomes eligible by virtue of the remission, upon application therefor, shall be awarded effective as provided by § 3.114.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103)

[27 FR 8590, Aug. 28, 1962, as amended at 37 FR 19134, Sept. 19, 1972; 53 FR 17934, May 19, 1988]

§ 3.902 Treasonable acts.

(a) *Definition.* An act of mutiny, treason, sabotage or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or of its allies.

(b) *Effect on claim.* For the purposes of paragraph (d) of this section, any person determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be guilty of a treasonable act forfeits all gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs which he or she may be receiving or would have been entitled to receive in the future.

(c) *Forfeiture before September 2, 1959.* Where forfeiture for treasonable acts was declared before September 2, 1959, the Secretary may pay any part of benefits so forfeited to the dependents of the person provided the decision to apportion was authorized prior to September 2, 1959, except that the amount may not be in excess of that which the dependent would be entitled to as a death benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104(c))

(1) *Compensation.* Whenever a veteran entitled to disability compensation has forfeited his or her right, any part of the compensation payable except for the forfeiture may be paid to the veteran's spouse, children and parents. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(i) Service-connected death benefit payable.

(ii) Amount of compensation payable but for the forfeiture.

No benefits are payable to any person participating in the treasonable act causing the forfeiture.

(2) *Pension.* Whenever a veteran entitled to pension has forfeited his or her right, any part of the pension payable except for the forfeiture provision may

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be paid to the veteran's spouse and children. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(i) Nonservice-connected death benefit payable.

(ii) Amount of pension being paid the veteran at the time of forfeiture.

No benefits are payable to any person who participated in the treasonable act causing the forfeiture.

(d) *Forfeiture after September 1, 1959.* After September 1, 1959, forfeiture by reason of a treasonable act may be declared only

(1) Where the person was not residing or domiciled in a State as defined in § 3.1(i) at the time of commission of the act; or

(2) Where the person ceased to be a resident of or domiciled in a State as defined in § 3.1(i) before expiration of the period during which criminal prosecution could be instituted; or

(3) The treasonable act was committed in the Philippine Islands.

No part of the benefits forfeited by the person primarily entitled shall be paid to any dependent.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104)

(e) *Children.* A treasonable act committed by a child or children, regardless of age, who are in the surviving spouse's custody and included in an award to such person will not affect the award to the surviving spouse.

[27 FR 8590, Aug. 28, 1962; 53 FR 17934, May 19, 1988]

§ 3.903 Subversive activities.

(a) *Definition.* Any offense for which punishment is prescribed: (1) In title 18 U.S.C., sections 792, 793, 794, 798, 2381 through 2385, 2387 through 2390, and chapter 105;

(2) In title 18 U.S.C., sections 175, 229, 831, 1091, 2332a, and 2332b, for claims filed on or after December 17, 2003.

(3) In the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Articles 94, 104 and 106 (10 U.S.C. 894, 904, and 906);

(4) In the following sections of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954: Sections 222 through 226 (42 U.S.C. 2272-2276); and

(5) In section 4 of the Internal Security Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. 783).

(b) *Effect on claim.* (1) Any person who is convicted after September 1, 1959, of

subversive activities shall from and after the date of commission of such offense have no right to gratuitous benefits (including the right to burial in a national cemetery) under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on periods of military, naval, or air service commencing before the date of the commission of such offense and no other person shall be entitled to such benefits on account of such person.

(2) The Attorney General will notify the Department of Veterans Affairs in each case in which a person is indicted or convicted of an offense listed in paragraphs (a)(1), (3), and (4) of this section. The Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the Treasury, as may be appropriate, will notify the Department of Veterans Affairs in each case in which a person is convicted of an offense listed in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(c) *Presidential pardon.* Where any person whose right to benefits has been so terminated is granted a pardon of the offense by the President of the United States, the right to such benefits shall be restored as of the date of such pardon, if otherwise eligible.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6105)

[27 FR 8591, Aug. 28, 1962, as amended at 38 FR 4511, Feb. 15, 1973; 38 FR 30106, Nov. 1, 1973; 53 FR 17934, May 19, 1988; 71 FR 44919, Aug. 8, 2006]

§ 3.904 Effect of forfeiture after veteran's death.

(a) *Fraud.* Whenever a veteran has forfeited his or her right by reason of fraud, his or her surviving dependents upon proper application may be paid pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, if otherwise eligible. No benefits are payable to any person who participated in the fraud causing the forfeiture.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(c))

(b) *Treasonable acts.* Death benefits may be paid as provided in paragraph (a) of this section where forfeiture by reason of a treasonable act was declared before September 2, 1959, and such benefits were authorized prior to that date. Otherwise, no award of gratuitous benefits (including the right to

burial in a national cemetery) may be made to any person based on any period of service commencing before the date of commission of the offense which resulted in the forfeiture.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104(c))

(c) *Subversive activities.* Where the veteran was convicted of subversive activities after September 1, 1959, no award of gratuitous benefits (including the right to burial in a national cemetery) may be made to any person based on any period of service commencing before the date of commission of the offense which resulted in the forfeiture unless the veteran had been granted a pardon of the offense by the President of the United States. If pardoned, the veteran's surviving dependents upon proper application may be paid pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, if otherwise eligible, and the right to burial in a national cemetery is restored.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6105(a))

[27 FR 8591, Aug. 28, 1962, as amended at 38 FR 30106, Nov. 1, 1973; 39 FR 13970, Apr. 19, 1974; 53 FR 16924, May 19, 1988]

§ 3.905 Declaration of forfeiture or remission of forfeiture.

(a) *Jurisdiction.* At the regional office level, except in VA Regional Office, Manila, Philippines, the Regional Counsel is authorized to determine whether the evidence warrants formal consideration as to forfeiture. In the Manila Regional Office the Veterans Service Center Manager is authorized to make this determination. Submissions may also be made by the director of a service, the Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals, and the General Counsel. Jurisdiction to determine whether the claimant or payee has forfeited the right to gratuitous benefits or to remit a prior forfeiture is vested in the Director, Compensation Service, and the Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service, and personnel to whom authority has been delegated under the provisions of § 3.100(c).

(b) *Fraud or treasonable acts.* Forfeiture of benefits under § 3.901 or § 3.902 will not be declared until the person has been notified by the Regional Counsel or, in VA Regional Office, Ma-

nila, Philippines, the Veterans Service Center Manager, of the right to present a defense. Such notice shall consist of a written statement sent to the person's latest address of record setting forth the following:

(1) The specific charges against the person;

(2) A detailed statement of the evidence supporting the charges, subject to regulatory limitations on disclosure of information;

(3) Citation and discussion of the applicable statute;

(4) The right to submit a statement or evidence within 60 days, either to rebut the charges or to explain the person's position;

(5) The right to a hearing within 60 days, with representation by counsel of the person's own choosing, that fees for the representation are limited in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5904(c) and that no expenses incurred by a claimant, counsel or witness will be paid by VA.

(c) *Subversive activities.* Automatic forfeiture of benefits under § 3.903 will be effectuated by an official authorized to declare a forfeiture as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) *Finality of decisions.* A decision of forfeiture is subject to the provisions of § 3.104(a) and §§ 20.1103 and 20.1104 of this chapter. The officials authorized to file administrative appeals and the time limit for filing such appeals are set forth in § 19.51 of this chapter.

(e) *Remission of forfeiture.* In event of remission of forfeiture under § 3.901(e), any amounts paid as an apportionment(s) during periods of the previously forfeited beneficiary's reentitlement will be offset.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates; forfeiture. See § 3.400(m). Reductions and discontinuances; fraud. See § 3.500(k). Reductions and discontinuances; treasonable acts or subversive activities. See § 3.500(s). Adjustments and resumptions. See § 3.669. Burial benefits. See § 3.1609.

[28 FR 2234, Mar. 7, 1963, as amended at 29 FR 7547, June 12, 1964; 37 FR 19134, Sept. 19, 1972; 39 FR 13970, Apr. 19, 1974; 53 FR 17934, May 19, 1988; 58 FR 32443, June 10, 1993; 79 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014]

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PROTECTION

§ 3.950 Helpless children; Spanish-American and prior wars.

Marriage is not a bar to the payment of pension or compensation to a helpless child under an award approved prior to April 1, 1944. The presumption, arising from the fact of marriage, that helplessness has ceased may be overcome by positive proof of continuing helplessness. As to awards approved on or after April 1, 1944, pension or compensation may not be paid to a helpless child who has married.

[26 FR 1608, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.951 Preservation of disability ratings.

(a) A readjustment to the Schedule for Rating Disabilities shall not be grounds for reduction of a disability rating in effect on the date of the readjustment unless medical evidence establishes that the disability to be evaluated has actually improved.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(b) A disability which has been continuously rated at or above any evaluation of disability for 20 or more years for compensation purposes under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not be reduced to less than such evaluation except upon a showing that such rating was based on fraud. Likewise, a rating of permanent total disability for pension purposes which has been in force for 20 or more years will not be reduced except upon a showing that the rating was based on fraud. The 20-year period will be computed from the effective date of the evaluation to the effective date of reduction of evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 110)

[34 FR 11970, July 16, 1969, as amended at 57 FR 10426, Mar. 26, 1992]

§ 3.952 Protected ratings.

Ratings under the Schedule of Disability Ratings, 1925, which were the basis of compensation on April 1, 1946, are subject to modification only when a change in physical or mental condition would have required a reduction under the 1925 schedule, or an increased evaluation has been assigned under the

Schedule for Rating Disabilities, 1945 (looseleaf edition), after which time all evaluations will be under the 1945 schedule (loose-leaf edition) only. Such increased evaluations must be of an other than temporary nature (due to hospitalization, surgery, etc.). When a temporary evaluation is involved, the 1925 schedule evaluation will be restored after the period of increase has elapsed unless the permanent residuals would have required reduction under that schedule, or unless an increased evaluation would be assignable under a 1945 schedule (looseleaf edition) rating. In any instance where the changed condition represents an increased degree of disability under either rating schedule but the evaluation provided by the 1945 schedule (looseleaf edition) is less than the evaluation in effect under the 1925 schedule on April 1, 1946, the 1925 schedule evaluation and award are protected.

[26 FR 12766, Dec. 30, 1961]

§ 3.953 Pub. L. 85-56 and Pub. L. 85-857.

(a) *In receipt of or entitled to receive benefits on December 31, 1958.* Any person receiving or entitled to receive benefits under any public law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on December 31, 1958, may, except where there was fraud, clear and unmistakable error of fact or law, or misrepresentation of material facts, continue to receive such benefits as long as the conditions warranting such payment under those laws continue. The greater benefit under the previous law or the corresponding section of title 38 U.S.C., will be paid in the absence of an election to receive the lesser benefit.

(Authority: Section 10, Pub. L. 85-857)

(b) *Emergency officers' retirement pay.* Any person who was receiving, or entitled to receive, emergency officers' retirement pay, or other privileges or benefits as a retired emergency officer of World War I, on December 31, 1958, under the laws in effect on that day, will, except where there was fraud,

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clear and unmistakable error as to conclusion of fact or law, or misrepresentation of material facts, continue to receive, or be entitled to receive, emergency officers' retirement pay at the rate otherwise payable on December 31, 1958, and such other privileges and benefits, so long as the conditions warranting such pay, privileges, and benefits under those laws continue.

(Authority: Section 11, Pub. L. 85-857)

(c) *Service connection established under prior laws.* In the absence of fraud, misrepresentation of material facts or clear and unmistakable error, all cases where compensation was payable on December 31, 1957, for disability service connected under prior laws, repealed by Pub. L. 85-56, including those service connected under the second proviso of section 200 of the World War Veterans' Act, 1924, as amended, are protected by section 2316(b), Pub. L. 85-56 and section 10, Pub. L. 85-857 as to both service connection and rate of compensation, so long as the conditions warranting such status and rate continue. Any disability so service connected may be evaluated under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities, 1945 (looseleaf edition) and benefits awarded on the basis thereof, as well as special monthly compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114, provided such action results in compensation payable at a rate equal to or higher than that payable on December 31, 1957. Where a changed physical condition warrants reevaluation of service-connected disabilities, compensation will be awarded under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1114.

[26 FR 1608, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 26 FR 8561, Sept. 13, 1961; 26 FR 12766, Dec. 30, 1961]

§§ 3.955-3.956 [Reserved]

§ 3.957 Service connection.

Service connection for any disability or death granted or continued under title 38 U.S.C., which has been in effect for 10 or more years will not be severed except upon a showing that the original grant was based on fraud or it is clearly shown from military records that the person concerned did not have the requisite service or character of discharge. The 10-year period will be

computed from the effective date of the Department of Veterans Affairs finding of service connection to the effective date of the rating decision severing service connection, after compliance with § 3.105(d). The protection afforded in this section extends to claims for dependency and indemnity compensation or death compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1159)

[33 FR 15286, Oct. 15, 1968]

§ 3.958 Federal employees' compensation cases.

Any award approved prior to September 13, 1960, authorizing Department of Veterans Affairs benefits concurrently with an award of benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act based on a finding that the same disability or death was due to civilian employment is not affected by the prohibition against concurrent awards contained in 5 U.S.C. 8116(b).

[41 FR 20408, May 18, 1976]

§ 3.959 Tuberculosis.

Any veteran who, on August 19, 1968, was receiving or entitled to receive compensation for active or inactive (arrested) tuberculosis may receive compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(q) and 1156 as in effect before August 20, 1968.

(Authority: Pub. L. 90-493; 82 Stat. 809)

[33 FR 16275, Nov. 6, 1968]

§ 3.960 Section 306 and old-law pension protection.

(a) *General.* Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, any person eligible to elect improved pension under § 3.711 or 3.712 who is in receipt of section 306 or old-law pension on December 31, 1978, shall in the absence of an election to receive improved pension, continue to receive such pension at the monthly rate payable on December 31, 1978.

(b) *Termination.* Pension payable under paragraph (a) of this section shall be terminated for any one of the following reasons:

(1) A veteran pensioner ceases to be permanently and totally disabled.

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(2) A surviving spouse pensioner ceases to meet the definition of *surviving spouse* in 38 U.S.C. 101(3).

(3) A child pensioner ceases to meet the definition of *child* in 38 U.S.C. 101(4).

(4) A section 306 pensioner's countable annual income, determined under §§ 3.250 to 3.270, exceeds the applicable amount stated in § 3.26(a).

(5) An old-law pensioner's countable annual income determined under §§ 3.250 to 3.270 exceeds the applicable amount stated in § 3.26(c).

(6) A section 306 pensioner has a net worth of such size that it is reasonable that some part of it be consumed for the pensioner's maintenance. Evaluation of net worth shall be made under § 3.263.

(c) *Reduction.* The pension rate payable under paragraph (a) of this section shall be reduced by the amount of any additional pension payable by reason of a dependent upon the loss of such dependent. A veteran or surviving spouse who no longer has any dependents shall not continue to receive either section 306 pension or old-law pension if countable annual income exceeds the appropriate rate in § 3.26(a), (b), or (c).

(d) *Finality of termination.* Termination of section 306 pension or old-law pension for one of the reasons listed in paragraph (b) of this section precludes a person from thereafter establishing entitlement under any other pension program except the improved pension program.

(Authority: Sec. 306 of Pub. L. 95-588, 92 Stat. 2497)

[44 FR 45944, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 56 FR 28824, June 25, 1991]

ACCRUED

§ 3.1000 Entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 5121 to benefits due and unpaid upon death of a beneficiary.

(a) *Basic entitlement.* Except as provided in §§ 3.1001 and 3.1008, where death occurred on or after December 1, 1962, periodic monetary benefits (other than insurance and servicemembers' indemnity) authorized under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to which a payee was entitled at his or her death under existing ratings or decisions or those based on evi-

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dence in the file at date of death, and due and unpaid will, upon the death of such person, be paid as follows:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(a))

(1) Upon the death of a veteran to the living person first listed as follows:

(i) His or her spouse;

(ii) His or her children (in equal shares);

(iii) His or her dependent parents (in equal shares) or the surviving parent.

(2) Upon the death of a surviving spouse or remarried surviving spouse, to the veteran's children.

(3) Upon the death of a child, to the surviving children of the veteran entitled to death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation.

(4) Upon the death of a child claiming benefits under chapter 18 of this title, to the surviving parents.

(5) In all other cases, only so much of the accrued benefit may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse the person who bore the expense of last sickness or burial. (See § 3.1002.)

(b) *Apportionments.* (1) Upon the death of a person receiving an apportioned share of benefits payable to a veteran, all or any part of such unpaid amount is payable to the veteran or to any other dependent or dependents of the veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(a)(1))

(2) Where at the date of death of the veteran an apportioned share is being paid to or has been withheld on behalf of another person, the apportioned amount remaining unpaid for periods prior to the last day of the month before the veteran's death is payable to the apportionee.

(3) Where the accrued death pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation was payable for a child as an apportioned share of the surviving spouse's benefit, payment will be made under the provisions of paragraph (a)(5) of this section, on the expenses of such deceased child's last sickness or burial.

(c) *Claims and evidence.* Application for accrued benefits must be filed within 1 year after the date of death. A claim for death pension, compensation,

or dependency and indemnity compensation, by an apportionee, surviving spouse, child or parent is deemed to include claim for any accrued benefits. (See § 3.152(b)).

(1) If an application for accrued benefits is incomplete because the claimant has not furnished information necessary to establish that he or she is within the category of eligible persons under the provisions of paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(5) or paragraph (b) of this section and that circumstances exist which make the claimant the specific person entitled to payment of all or part of any benefits which may have accrued, VA shall notify the claimant:

(i) Of the type of information required to complete the application;

(ii) That VA will take no further action on the claim unless VA receives the required information; and

(iii) That if VA does not receive the required information within 1 year of the date of the original VA notification of information required, no benefits will be awarded on the basis of that application.

(2) Failure to file timely claim, or a waiver of rights, by a preferred dependent will not serve to vest title in a person in a lower class or a claimant for reimbursement; neither will such failure or waiver by a person or persons in a joint class serve to increase the amount payable to another or others in the class.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(c); 5112(b))

(d) *Definitions.* (1) *Spouse* means the surviving spouse of the veteran, whose marriage meets the requirements of § 3.1(j) or § 3.52. Where the marriage meets the requirements of § 3.1(j) date of marriage and continuous cohabitation are not factors.

(2) *Child* is as defined in § 3.57 and includes an unmarried child who became permanently incapable of self-support prior to attaining 18 years of age as well as an unmarried child over the age of 18 but not over 23 years of age, who was pursuing a course of instruction within the meaning of § 3.57 at the time of the payee's death. However, upon the death of a child in receipt of death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, any accrued will be payable to the surviving

child or children of the veteran entitled to death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation. Upon the death of a child, another child who has elected dependents' educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 may receive accrued death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, payable on behalf of the deceased child for periods prior to the commencement of benefits under that chapter.

(3) *Dependent parent* is as defined in § 3.59: *Provided*, That the mother or father was dependent within the meaning of § 3.250 at the date of the veteran's death.

(4) *Evidence in the file at date of death* means evidence in VA's possession on or before the date of the beneficiary's death, even if such evidence was not physically located in the VA claims folder on or before the date of death, in support of a claim for VA benefits pending on the date of death.

(5) *Claim for VA benefits pending on the date of death* means a claim filed with VA that had not been finally adjudicated by VA on or before the date of death. Such a claim includes a deceased beneficiary's claim to reopen a finally disallowed claim based upon new and material evidence or a deceased beneficiary's claim of clear and unmistakable error in a prior rating or decision. Any new and material evidence must have been in VA's possession on or before the date of the beneficiary's death.

(e) *Subsistence allowance.* Subsistence allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. ch. 31 remaining due and unpaid at the date of the veteran's death, is payable under the provisions of this section.

(f) *Dependents' educational assistance.* Educational assistance allowance or special restorative training allowance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35, remaining due and unpaid at the date of death of an eligible surviving spouse or eligible child is payable to a child or children of the veteran (see paragraphs (a)(2), (a)(3) and (d)(2) of this section), or on the expenses of last sickness and burial (see paragraph (a)(5) of this section.) Benefits due and unpaid at the date of death of an eligible spouse are payable only on the expenses of last sickness

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and burial (see paragraph (a)(5) of this section).

(g) *Veterans educational assistance.* Educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapters 30, 32, or 34, and 10 U.S.C. chapter 1606 remaining due and unpaid at the date of the veteran's death is payable under the provisions of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121)

(h) *Clothing allowance.* Clothing allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1162 remaining due and unpaid at the date of the veteran's death is payable under the provisions of this section.

(i) *Active service pay.* Benefits awarded under this section do not include compensation or pension benefits for any period for which the veteran received active service pay.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(c))

[26 FR 1608, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 11892, Dec. 1, 1962; 30 FR 11389, Sept. 8, 1965; 31 FR 4790, Mar. 22, 1966; 34 FR 840, Jan. 18, 1969; 39 FR 15126, May 1, 1974; 56 FR 18733, Apr. 24, 1991; 56 FR 24239, May 29, 1991; 61 FR 67950, Dec. 26, 1996; 62 FR 5529, Feb. 6, 1997; 62 FR 35423, July 1, 1997; 67 FR 65708, Oct. 28, 2002; 71 FR 78369, Dec. 29, 2006; 80 FR 18117, Apr. 3, 2015]

§ 3.1001 Hospitalized competent veterans.

The provisions of this section apply only to the payment of amounts actually withheld on a running award under § 3.551(b) which are payable in a lump sum after the veteran's death.

(a) *Basic entitlement.* Where an award of disability pension for a competent veteran without dependents was reduced because of hospital treatment or institutional or domiciliary care by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veteran dies while receiving such treatment or care or before payment of amounts withheld, the lump sum is payable to the living person first listed as follows:

(1) The veteran's spouse, as defined in § 3.1000(d)(1);

(2) The veteran's children (in equal shares), as defined in § 3.57 but without regard to their age or marital status;

(3) The veteran's dependent parents (in equal shares), or the surviving dependent parent, as defined in § 3.1000(d)(3);

(4) In all other cases, only so much of the lump sum may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse a person who bore the expenses of last sickness or burial. (See § 3.1002.)

(b) *Claim.* Applications must be filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs within 5 years after the death of the veteran. If, however, any person otherwise entitled is under legal disability at the time of the veteran's death, the 5-year period will run from the date of termination or removal of the legal disability.

(1) There is no time limit on the retroactive period of an award or for furnishing evidence.

(2) Failure to file timely claim, or a waiver of rights, by a preferred dependent will not serve to vest title in a person in a lower class or a claimant for reimbursement; neither will such failure or waiver by a person or persons in a joint class serve to increase the amount payable to another or others in the class.

(c) *Lump sum withheld after discharge from institution.* The provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section will apply in the event of the death of any veteran prior to receiving a lump sum which was withheld because treatment or care was terminated against medical advice or as the result of disciplinary action.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

[26 FR 1609, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 5539, June 12, 1962; 27 FR 8177, Aug. 16, 1962; 27 FR 11893, Dec. 1, 1962; 39 FR 15126, May 1, 1974]

§ 3.1002 Political subdivisions of United States.

No part of any accrued benefits will be used to reimburse any political subdivision of the United States for expenses incurred in the last sickness or burial of any beneficiary. (See § 3.1(o)).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(b) and 5502(d))

[39 FR 15126, May 1, 1974]

§ 3.1003 Returned and canceled checks.

Where the payee of a check for benefits has died prior to negotiating the check, the check shall be returned to the issuing office and canceled.

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(a) The amount represented by the returned check, or any amount recovered following improper negotiation of the check, shall be payable to the living person or persons in the order of precedence listed in §3.1000(a)(1) through (5), except that the total amount payable shall not include any payment for the month in which the payee died (see §3.500(g)), and payments to persons described in §3.1000(a)(5) shall be limited to the amount necessary to reimburse such persons for the expenses of last sickness and/or burial.

(1) There is no limit on the retroactive period for which payment of the amount represented by the check may be made, and no time limit for filing a claim to obtain the proceeds of the check or for furnishing evidence to perfect a claim.

(2) Nothing in this section will preclude payment to an otherwise entitled claimant having a lower order of precedence under §3.1000(a)(1) through (5), if it is shown that the person or persons having a higher order of precedence are deceased at the time the claim is adjudicated.

(b) Subject to the limitations in §3.500(g) of this part, any amount not paid in the manner provided in paragraph (a) of this section shall be paid to the estate of the deceased payee, provided that the estate, including the amount paid under this paragraph, will not will not revert to the state because there is no one eligible to inherit it.

(c) The provisions of this section do not apply to checks for lump sums representing amounts withheld under §3.551(b) or §3.557. These amounts are subject to the provisions of §§3.1001 and 3.1007, as applicable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5122)

[59 FR 25329, May 16, 1994, as amended at 64 FR 54207, Oct. 6, 1999; 80 FR 18117, Apr. 3, 2015]

§§ 3.1004–3.1006 [Reserved]

§ 3.1007 Hospitalized incompetent veterans.

Where an award of disability pension for an incompetent veteran without dependents was reduced under §3.551(b) because of hospitalization, institutional or domiciliary care by the De-

partment of Veterans Affairs, or an award of disability pension, compensation or emergency officers' retirement pay was discontinued under former §3.557(b) (as applicable prior to December 27, 2001) because the veteran was hospitalized by the United States or a political subdivision and had an estate which equaled or exceeded the statutory maximum, and the veteran dies before payment of amounts withheld or not paid by reason of such care, no part of such amount will be paid to any person. The provisions of this section are applicable to amounts withheld for periods prior to as well as subsequent to the rating of incompetency. The term *dies before payment* includes cases in which a check was issued and the veteran died before negotiating the check.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

[39 FR 30349, Aug. 22, 1974, as amended at 66 FR 48561, Sept. 21, 2001; 68 FR 34543, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.1008 Accrued benefits payable to foreign beneficiaries.

In case of death of the payee of any check in payment of periodic monetary benefits (other than insurance and servicemembers' indemnity) accruing under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, while the amount thereof remains in the special deposit account established by Pub. L. 828, 76th Congress, such amount will be payable under section 3 of that act. (31 U.S.C. 125) However, the accrued amount will be payable only if the person on whose behalf checks were issued and the person claiming the accrued amount have not been guilty of mutiny, treason, sabotage, or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or of its allies.

[26 FR 1609, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.1009 Personal funds of patients.

The provisions of this section are applicable to gratuitous benefits deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs either before, on, or after December 1, 1959, in a personal funds of patients account for an incompetent veteran who was incompetent at the date of death. Where the veteran died after November 30, 1959:

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(a) *Eligible persons.* Gratuitous benefits shall be paid to the living person first listed as follows:

(1) His or her spouse, as defined in §3.1000(d)(1);

(2) His or her children (in equal shares), as defined in §3.57 but without regard to their age or marital status;

(3) His or her dependent parents (in equal shares) as defined in §3.59 or the surviving parent, provided that the parent was dependent within the meaning of §3.250 at the date of the veteran's death.

(4) In all other cases, only so much may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse a person who bore the expense of last sickness or burial. (See §3.1002.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5502(d))

(b) *Claim.* Application must be filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs within 5 years after the death of the veteran. If, however, any person otherwise entitled is under legal disability at the time of the veteran's death, the 5-year period will run from the date of termination or removal of the legal disability.

(1) There is no time limit for the submission of evidence.

(2) Failure to file timely claim, or a waiver of rights, by a preferred dependent will not serve to vest title in a person in a lower class or a claimant for reimbursement; neither will such failure or waiver by a person or persons in a joint class serve to increase the amount payable to another or others in the class.

[27 FR 5539, June 12, 1962, as amended at 28 FR 10487, Sept. 28, 1963; 39 FR 30349, Aug. 22, 1974]

§3.1010 Substitution under 38 U.S.C. 5121A following death of a claimant.

(a) *Eligibility.* If a claimant dies on or after October 10, 2008, a person eligible for accrued benefits under §3.1000(a) listed in 38 CFR 3.1000(a)(1) through (5) may, in priority order, request to substitute for the deceased claimant in a claim for periodic monetary benefits (other than insurance and servicemembers' indemnity) under laws administered by the Secretary, or an appeal of a decision with respect to such a claim, that was pending before the agency of original jurisdiction or

the Board of Veterans' Appeals when the claimant died. Upon VA's grant of a request to substitute, the substitute may continue the claim or appeal on behalf of the deceased claimant for purposes of processing the claim or appeal to completion. Any benefits ultimately awarded are payable to the substitute and other members of a joint class, if any, in equal shares.

(b) *Time and place for filing a request.* A person may not substitute for a deceased claimant under this section unless the person files a request to substitute with the agency of original jurisdiction no later than one year after the claimant's death.

(c) *Request format.* (1) A request to substitute must be submitted in writing. At a minimum, a request to substitute must indicate intent to substitute; include the deceased claimant's claim number, Social Security number, or appeal number; and include the names of the deceased claimant and the person requesting to substitute.

(2) In lieu of a specific request to substitute, a claim for accrued benefits, survivors pension, or dependency and indemnity compensation by an eligible person listed in §3.1000(a)(1) through (5) is deemed to include a request to substitute if a claim for periodic monetary benefits (other than insurance and servicemembers' indemnity) under laws administered by the Secretary, or an appeal of a decision with respect to such a claim, was pending before the agency of original jurisdiction or the Board of Veterans' Appeals when the claimant died. A claimant for accrued benefits, survivors pension, or dependency and indemnity compensation may waive the right to substitute in writing over the claimant's signature.

(d) *Evidence of eligibility.* A person filing a request to substitute must provide evidence of eligibility to substitute. Evidence of eligibility to substitute means evidence demonstrating that the person is among those listed in the categories of eligible persons in §3.1000(a)(1) through (5) and first in priority order. If a person's request to substitute does not include evidence of

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eligibility when it is originally submitted and the person may be an eligible person, the Secretary will notify the person—

(1) Of the evidence of eligibility required to complete the request to substitute;

(2) That VA will take no further action on the request to substitute unless VA receives the evidence of eligibility; and

(3) That VA must receive the evidence of eligibility no later than 60 days after the date of notification or one year after the claimant's death, whichever is later, or VA will deny the request to substitute.

(e) *Decisions on substitution requests.* Subject to the provisions of § 20.1302 of this chapter, the agency of original jurisdiction will decide in the first instance all requests to substitute, including any request to substitute in an appeal pending before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(1) *Notification.* The agency of original jurisdiction will provide written notification of the granting or denial of a request to substitute to the person who filed the request, together with notice in accordance with § 3.103(b)(1).

(2) *Appeals.* The denial of a request to substitute may be appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 7104(a) and 7105.

(3) *Joint class representative.* (i) A *joint class* means a group of two or more persons eligible to substitute under the same priority group under § 3.1000(a)(1) through (a)(5), e.g., two or more surviving children.

(ii) In the case of a joint class of potential substitutes, only one person of the joint class may be a substitute at any one time. The first eligible person in the joint class to file a request to substitute will be the substitute representing the joint class.

(f) *Adjudications involving a substitute.* The following provisions apply with respect to a claim or appeal in which a survivor has been substituted for the deceased claimant:

(1) *Notice under § 3.159.* VA will send notice under § 3.159(b), "Department of Veterans Affairs assistance in developing claims," to the substitute only if the required notice was not sent to the deceased claimant or if the notice sent

to the deceased claimant was inadequate.

(2) *Expansion of the claim not permitted.* A substitute may not add an issue to or expand the claim. However, a substitute may raise new theories of entitlement in support of the claim.

(3) *Submission of evidence and other rights.* A substitute has the same rights regarding hearings, representation, appeals, and the submission of evidence as would have applied to the claimant had the claimant not died. However, rights that may have applied to the claimant prior to death but which cannot practically apply to a substitute, such as the right to a medical examination, are not available to the substitute. The substitute must complete any action required by law or regulation within the time period remaining for the claimant to take such action on the date of his or her death. The time remaining to take such action will start to run on the date of the mailing of the decision granting the substitution request.

(4) *Board of Veterans' Appeals procedures.* The rules and procedures governing appeals involving substitutes before the Board of Veterans' Appeals are found in parts 19 and 20 of this chapter.

(g) *Limitations on substitution.* The following limitations apply with respect to substitution:

(1) *A claim or appeal must be pending.*

(i) A claim is considered to be pending if the claimant had filed the claim with an agency of original jurisdiction but dies before the agency of original jurisdiction makes a decision on the claim. A claim is also considered to be pending if, at the time of the claimant's death, the agency of original jurisdiction has made a decision on the claim, but the claimant has not filed a notice of disagreement, and the period allowed by law for filing a notice of disagreement has not expired.

(ii) An appeal is considered to be pending if a claimant filed a notice of disagreement in response to a notification from an agency of original jurisdiction of its decision on a claim, but

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dies before the Board of Veterans' Appeals issues a final decision on the appeal. If the Board issued a final decision on an appeal prior to the claimant's death, the appeal is not pending before VA for purposes of this section, even if the 120-day period for appealing the Board's decision to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has not yet expired.

(2) *Benefits awarded.* Any benefits ultimately awarded are limited to any past-due benefits for the time period between the effective date of the award and what would have been the effective date of discontinuance of the award as a result of the claimant's death.

(3) *Benefits for last sickness and burial only.* When substitution cannot be established under any of the categories listed in § 3.1000(a)(1) through (a)(4), only so much of any benefits ultimately awarded may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse the person who bore the expense of last sickness and burial. No part of any benefits ultimately awarded shall be used to reimburse any political subdivision of the United States for expenses incurred in the last sickness or burial of any claimant.

(4) *Substitution by subordinate members prohibited.* Failure to timely file a request to substitute, or a waiver of the right to request substitution, by a person of a preferred category of eligible person will not serve to vest the right to request substitution in a person in a lower category or a person who bore the expense of last sickness and burial; neither will such failure or waiver by a person or persons in a joint class serve to increase the amount payable to other persons in the class.

(5) *Death of a substitute.* If a substitute dies while a claim or appeal is pending before an agency of original jurisdiction, or an appeal of a decision on a claim is pending before the Board, another member of the same joint class or a member of the next preferred subordinate category listed in § 3.1000(a)(1) through (5) may substitute for the deceased substitute but only if the person requesting the successive substitution files a request to substitute no later than one year after the date of the sub-

stitute's death (not the date of the claimant's death).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121, 5121A)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0740)

[79 FR 52982, Sept. 5, 2014]

Subpart B—Burial Benefits

SOURCE: 79 FR 32658, June 6, 2014, unless otherwise noted.

AUTHORITY: 105 Stat. 386, 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 2302–2308, unless otherwise noted.

BURIAL BENEFITS: GENERAL

§ 3.1700 Types of VA burial benefits.

(a) *Burial benefits.* VA provides the following types of burial benefits, which are discussed in §§ 3.1700 through 3.1712:

(1) Burial allowance based on service-connected death;

(2) Burial allowance based on non-service-connected death;

(3) Burial allowance for a veteran who died while hospitalized by VA;

(4) Burial plot or interment allowance; and

(5) Reimbursement for transportation of remains.

(b) *Definition.* For purposes of this subpart, *burial* means all the legal methods of disposing of the remains of a deceased person, including, but not limited to, cremation, burial at sea, and medical school donation.

(c) *Cross references.* (1) Other benefits and services related to the memorialization or interment of a deceased veteran and certain survivors include the following:

(i) Burial in a national cemetery (see §§ 38.600 and 38.617 through 38.629 of this chapter);

(ii) Presidential memorial certificates (see 38 U.S.C. 112);

(iii) Burial flags (see § 1.10 of this chapter); and

(iv) Headstones or markers (see §§ 38.630 through 38.633 of this chapter).

(2) The provisions of §§ 3.1702 through 3.1711 do not apply to any of the programs listed in paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

§ 3.1701 Deceased veterans for whom VA may provide burial benefits.

For purposes of providing burial benefits under subpart B of this part, the term “veteran” means the same as provided in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). A veteran must be deceased, and burial benefits for that veteran must be authorized by a specific provision of law. For purposes of the non-service-connected burial allowance under 38 U.S.C. 2302, the term “veteran” includes a person who died during a period deemed to be active military, naval, or air service under §§ 3.6(b)(7), 3.7(m) and 3.7(o).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(2), 2302, 2303, 2307, 2308)

§ 3.1702 Persons who may receive burial benefits; priority of payments.

(a) *Automatic payments to surviving spouses of eligible deceased veterans.* (1) On or after July 7, 2014, VA may automatically pay a burial benefit to an eligible veteran’s surviving spouse, whether or not previously established as a dependent spouse on the deceased veteran’s compensation or pension award, when VA knows of or is informed of the existence of the surviving spouse, can establish the surviving spouse’s relationship under § 3.204 (when applicable), and is able to determine burial benefits eligibility based on evidence of record at the time VA updates its computer system to reflect the veteran’s date of death.

(2) VA may grant additional burial benefits, including the plot or interment allowance, reimbursement for transportation, and the service-connected burial allowance under § 3.1704, to the surviving spouse or any other eligible person in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section and based on a claim described in § 3.1703.

(b) *Priority of payments—claims received on or after July 7, 2014.* (1) Except for claims a State, or an agency or political subdivision of a State, files under § 3.1707, Plot or interment allowance for burial in a State veterans cemetery or other cemetery, or § 3.1708, Burial of a veteran whose remains are unclaimed, VA will pay, upon the death of a veteran, the first living person to file of those listed below:

(i) His or her surviving spouse;

(ii) The survivor of a legal union between the deceased veteran and the survivor that is not covered by paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section. For purposes of this paragraph, *legal union* means a formal relationship between the decedent and the survivor that

(A) Existed on the date of the veteran’s death,

(B) Was recognized under the law of the State in which the couple formalized the relationship, and

(C) Was evidenced by the State’s issuance of documentation memorializing the relationship;

(iii) His or her children, regardless of age;

(iv) His or her parents or the surviving parent; or

(v) The executor or administrator of the estate of the deceased veteran. If no executor or administrator has been appointed, VA may pay burial benefits based on a claim filed by a person acting for such estate who will distribute the burial benefits to the person or persons entitled to such distribution under the laws of the veteran’s last State of residence.

(2) In the case of a veteran whose remains are unclaimed, VA will pay the person or entity that provided burial services and transportation subject to the limitations prescribed in §§ 3.1708 and 3.1709.

(3) VA will pay burial benefits to a single representative of the categories in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. VA will not divide applicable burial benefits among claimants; it is the responsibility of the recipient to distribute benefits as may be required.

(c) *Priority of payments—claims received before July 7, 2014.*

(1) Claims for burial allowance may be executed by:

(i) The funeral director, if entire bill or any balance is unpaid (if unpaid bill or the unpaid balance is less than the applicable statutory burial allowance, only the unpaid amount may be claimed by the funeral director); or

(ii) The individual whose personal funds were used to pay burial, funeral, and transportation expenses; or

(iii) The executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran or the estate of the person who paid the expenses of the veteran’s burial or provided such

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services. If no executor or administrator has been appointed then by some person acting for such estate who will make distribution of the burial allowance to the person or persons entitled under the laws governing the distribution of interstate estates in the State of the decedent's personal domicile.

(2) Claims for the plot or interment allowance (except for claims filed by a State or an agency or political subdivision thereof), under § 3.1707 may be executed by:

(i) The funeral director, if he or she provided the plot or interment services, or advanced funds to pay for them, and if the entire bill for such or any balance thereof is unpaid (if the unpaid bill or the unpaid balance is less than the statutory plot or interment allowance, only the unpaid amount may be claimed by the funeral director); or

(ii) The person(s) whose personal funds were used to defray the cost of the plot or interment expenses; or

(iii) The person or entity from whom the plot was purchased or who provided interment services if the bill for such is unpaid in whole or in part. An unpaid bill for a plot will take precedence in payment of the plot or interment allowance over an unpaid bill for other interment expenses or a claim for reimbursement for such expenses. Any remaining balance of the plot or interment allowance may then be applied to interment expenses; or

(iv) The executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran or the estate of the person who bore the expense of the plot or interment expenses. If no executor or administrator has been appointed, claim for the plot or interment allowance may be filed as provided in paragraph (c)(1)(iii) of this section for the burial allowance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302, 2303, 2307)

Cross Reference: § 3.1(i) for the definition of "State".

[79 FR 32658, June 6, 2014, as amended at 83 FR 39888, Aug. 13, 2018]

§ 3.1703 Claims for burial benefits.

(a) *When claims must be filed*—(1) *General rule.* Except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, VA must receive a claim for the non-service-con-

nected burial allowance no later than 2 years after the burial of the veteran. There are no other time limitations to file claims for burial benefits under subpart B of this part.

(2) *Correction of character of discharge.* If the non-service-connected burial allowance was not payable at the time of the veteran's death or burial because of the character of the veteran's discharge from service, VA may pay the allowance if a competent authority corrects the deceased veteran's discharge to reflect a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable. Claims for the non-service-connected burial allowance must be filed no later than 2 years after the date that the discharge was corrected.

(b) *Supporting evidence*—(1) *General rule.* In order to pay burial benefits, VA must receive all of the following:

(i) A claim, except as provided in § 3.1702(a);

(ii) Proof of the veteran's death in accordance with § 3.211, Death; and

(iii) For persons listed under § 3.1702(b), except as provided in § 3.1702(a), a statement certifying that the claimant incurred burial, plot or interment, or transportation costs of the deceased veteran.

(2) *Reimbursement of transportation expenses.* In order to pay transportation costs, VA must receive a receipt, preferably on letterhead, showing who paid the costs, the name of the deceased veteran, the specific transportation expenses incurred, and the dates of the services rendered.

(3) *Eligibility based on evidence of record.* VA may establish eligibility for benefits in this subpart based upon evidence of service and disability that VA relied upon to grant disability compensation or pension during the veteran's lifetime, unless VA has some other evidence on the date that it receives notice of the veteran's death that creates doubt as to the correctness of that evidence.

(The information collection requirements in this section are approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900-0003.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2304, 5107(a))

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BURIAL BENEFITS: ALLOWANCES & EXPENSES PAID BY VA

§ 3.1704 Burial allowance based on service-connected death.

(a) *General rule.* VA will pay the maximum burial allowance specified in 38 U.S.C. 2307 for the burial and funeral expenses of a veteran described in paragraph (b) of this section, unless VA has evidence on the date it receives notice of the veteran's death that the expenses incurred were less than that amount. Payment of the service-connected burial allowance is in lieu of other allowances authorized by subpart B of this part, except those allowances listed in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) *Eligibility.* A burial allowance is payable under this section for a veteran who died as a result of a service-connected disability or disabilities. VA will presume, unless it has evidence to the contrary on the date it receives notice of the veteran's death, that a veteran died as a result of a service-connected disability or disabilities if, at the date of death, the veteran was rated totally disabled for a service-connected disability or disabilities, excluding a total disability rating based on individual unemployability.

(c) *Additional allowances available based on service-connected death.* In addition to the service-connected burial allowance authorized by this section:

(1) VA may reimburse for transportation expenses related to burial in a national cemetery under § 3.1709, Transportation expenses for burial in a national cemetery; and

(2) VA may pay the plot or interment allowance for burial in a State veterans cemetery under § 3.1707(a), Plot or interment allowance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2303, 2307, 2308)

Cross Reference: § 3.1(i), for the definition of "State".

§ 3.1705 Burial allowance based on non-service-connected death.

(a) *General rule.* VA will pay the maximum burial allowance specified in 38 U.S.C. 2302 for the burial and funeral expenses of a veteran described in paragraph (b) of this section, unless VA has evidence on the date it receives notice of the veteran's death that the expenses incurred were less than that

amount. Payment of the non-service-connected burial allowance is subject to other applicable regulations in subpart B of this part.

(b) *Eligibility.* A burial allowance is payable under this section for a veteran who, on the date of death:

(1) Was receiving VA pension or disability compensation;

(2) Would have been receiving disability compensation but for the receipt of military retired pay; or

(3) Had pending any of the following claims:

(i) An original claim for pension or disability compensation, and the evidence in the claims file on the date of death and any evidence received under paragraph (d) of this section is sufficient to grant pension or disability compensation effective before the date of death; or

(ii) A claim to reopen a previously denied pension or disability compensation claim, based on new and material evidence, and the evidence in the claims file on the date of the veteran's death and any evidence received under paragraph (d) of this section is sufficient to reopen the claim and grant pension or disability compensation effective before the date of death; or

(iii) A claim for which a person would be eligible to substitute for the deceased veteran under 38 U.S.C. 5121A, Substitution in case of death of claimant, and that claim, once processed to completion by the substitute, results in the grant of pension or disability compensation effective before the date of death.

(c) *Evidence in the claims file on the date of the veteran's death* means evidence in VA's possession on or before the date of the deceased veteran's death, even if such evidence was not part of the VA claims file on or before the date of death.

(d) *Requesting additional evidence.* If the veteran had either an original claim or a claim to reopen pending on the date of death and there is sufficient evidence in VA's possession to support an award of compensation or pension prior to the date of death, but VA determines that additional evidence is needed to confirm that the deceased would have been entitled prior to death, VA will request such evidence. If

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VA does not receive such evidence within 1 year after the date of the request, it will deny the claim.

(e) *Additional allowances available based on non-service-connected death.* In addition to the non-service-connected burial allowance authorized by this section:

(1) VA may reimburse for transportation expenses related to burial in a national cemetery under § 3.1709, Transportation expenses for burial in a national cemetery, but only if eligibility under paragraphs (b) of this section is based on a pending claim for, or award of, disability compensation, or eligibility for disability compensation but for receipt of military retired pay, rather than a claim for, or award of, pension; and

(2) VA may pay the plot or interment allowance for burial in a State veterans cemetery under § 3.1707(a), Plot or interment allowance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302, 2303, 2304, 2308)

Cross Reference: § 3.1(i), for the definition of "State".

§ 3.1706 Burial allowance for a veteran who died while hospitalized by VA.

(a) *General rule.* VA will pay up to the maximum burial allowance specified in 38 U.S.C. 2303(a) for the burial and funeral expenses of a veteran described in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Eligibility.* A burial allowance is payable under this section for a veteran whose death was not service-connected and who died while hospitalized by VA. For purposes of this allowance, a veteran was hospitalized by VA if the veteran:

(1) Was properly admitted to a VA facility (as described in 38 U.S.C. 1701(3)) for hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1710 or 1711(a);

(2) Was transferred or admitted to a non-VA facility (as described in 38 U.S.C. 1701(4)) for hospital care under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1703;

(3) Was transferred or admitted to a nursing home for nursing home care at the expense of the U.S. under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1720;

(4) Was transferred or admitted to a State nursing home for nursing home care for which payment is authorized under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1741;

(5) Was traveling under proper prior authorization, and at VA expense, to or from a specified place for purpose of examination, treatment, or care; or

(6) Was hospitalized by VA pursuant to any of paragraphs (b)(1) through (4) of this section but was not at the facility at the time of death and was:

(i) On authorized absence that did not exceed 96 hours at the time of death;

(ii) On unauthorized absence for a period not in excess of 24 hours at the time of death; or

(iii) Absent from the facility for a period not in excess of 24 hours of combined authorized and unauthorized absence at the time of death.

(c) *Hospitalization in the Philippines.* Hospitalization in the Philippines under 38 U.S.C. 1731, 1732, and 1733 does not meet the requirements of this section.

(d) *Additional allowances available based on death while hospitalized by VA.* In addition to the burial allowance authorized by this section:

(1) VA will reimburse for the expense of transporting the remains of a person described in paragraph (b) of this section to the place of burial subject to the limitations of § 3.1709 and where the death occurs within a State and:

(i) The place of burial is in the same State or any other State; or

(ii) The place of burial is in Canada or Mexico. However, reimbursement for transportation of the remains for such burial is authorized only from the place of death within a State to the port of embarkation within a State, or to the border limits of the United States.

(2) VA may pay the plot or interment allowance for burial in a veterans cemetery under § 3.1707, Plot or interment allowance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2303(a), 2308)

Cross Reference: § 3.1(z) for the definition of "nursing home", § 3.1(i) for the definition of "State".

§ 3.1707 Plot or interment allowances for burial in a State veterans cemetery or other cemetery.

(a) *General eligibility.* For a veteran who was eligible for burial in a national cemetery under 38 U.S.C. 2402,

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but was not buried in a national cemetery or other cemetery under the jurisdiction of the U.S., VA will pay the allowances described below, provided all criteria are met.

(b) *Plot or interment allowance for burial in a State veterans cemetery.* VA will pay the plot or interment allowance in the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2303(b)(1) (without regard to whether any other burial benefits were provided for that veteran) to a State, or an agency or political subdivision of a State, that provided a burial plot or interment for the veteran without charge if the State, or agency or political subdivision of the State:

(1) Is claiming the plot or interment allowance for burial of the veteran in a cemetery, or section of a cemetery, owned by the State or agency or subdivision of the State;

(2) Did not charge for the expense of the plot or interment; and

(3) Uses the cemetery or section of a cemetery solely for the interment of:

(i) Persons eligible for burial in a national cemetery; and

(ii) In a claim based on a veteran's death after October 31, 2000, either:

(A) Deceased members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces not otherwise eligible for interment in a national cemetery; or

(B) Deceased former members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces not otherwise eligible for interment in a national cemetery who were discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

(c) *Plot or interment allowance payable based on burial in other than a State veterans cemetery.* Unless VA has evidence on the date it receives notice of the veteran's death that the expenses incurred were less, VA will pay the maximum plot or interment allowance specified in 38 U.S.C. 2303(b)(2) to a claimant who incurred plot or interment expenses relating to the purchase of a burial plot for a deceased veteran if the veteran is buried in a cemetery other than a cemetery described in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(3) of this section and:

(1) The veteran is eligible for a burial allowance under § 3.1705, Burial allowance based on non-service-connected death;

(2) The veteran is eligible for a burial allowance under § 3.1706, Burial allowance for a veteran who died while hospitalized by VA;

(3) The veteran was discharged from active service for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty (VA will accept the official service record of such discharge as proof of eligibility for the plot or interment allowance and VA will disregard any previous VA determination made in connection with a claim for monetary benefits that the disability was not incurred or aggravated in line of duty); or

(4) The veteran, at the time of discharge from active service, had a disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability.

(d) *Definitions.* For purposes of subpart B of this part, *plot* or *burial plot* means the final disposal site of the remains, whether it is a grave, mausoleum vault, columbarium niche, or other similar place. *Plot or interment expenses* are those expenses associated with the final disposition of the remains and are not confined to the acts done within the burial grounds but may include the removal of remains for burial or interment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 2303(b))

Cross Reference: § 3.1(i) for the definition of "State".

§ 3.1708 Burial of a veteran whose remains are unclaimed.

(a) *General.* VA will pay the maximum burial allowance specified in 38 U.S.C. 2302 for the burial and funeral expenses of a veteran described in paragraph (b) of this section, unless VA has evidence on the date it receives notice of the veteran's death that the expenses incurred were less than that amount.

(b) *Eligibility.* A burial allowance is payable under this section for a veteran if the Secretary determines that:

(1) There is no next of kin or other person claiming the remains of the deceased veteran; and

(2) There are not sufficient resources available in the veteran's estate to cover the burial and funeral expenses.

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(c) *Additional allowance for transportation of unclaimed remains.* VA may reimburse for transportation expenses related to burial in a national cemetery under § 3.1709, Transportation expenses for burial in a national cemetery, for a veteran described in paragraph (b) of this section.

(d) *Burial.* When VA determines that a veteran's remains are unclaimed, the Director of the VA regional office in the area in which the veteran died will immediately complete arrangements for burial in a national cemetery or, at his or her option, in a cemetery or cemetery section meeting the requirements of paragraph (b) of § 3.1707, Plot or interment allowance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302(a))

Cross Reference: § 3.1(i) for the definition of "State".

§ 3.1709 Transportation expenses for burial in a national cemetery.

(a) *General.* VA will reimburse the costs of transportation, subject to paragraph (d) of this section, of a veteran's remains for burial in a national cemetery for a veteran described in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Eligibility.* VA will reimburse for the expense incurred, subject to paragraph (d) of this section, to transport a veteran's remains for burial in a national cemetery if:

(1) The veteran died as the result of a service-connected disability;

(2) The veteran was receiving service-connected disability compensation on the date of death;

(3) The veteran would have been receiving service-connected disability compensation on the date of death, but for the receipt of military retired pay or non-service-connected disability pension; or

(4) The Secretary determines the veteran is eligible for a burial allowance under § 3.1708.

(c) *Amount payable.* The amount payable under this section will not exceed the cost of transporting the remains to the national cemetery closest to the veteran's last place of residence in which burial space is available, and is subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph (d) of this section.

(d) *Reimbursable transportation expenses.* (1) VA will reimburse reason-

able transportation expenses, including but not limited to the costs of shipment via common carrier (*i.e.*, procuring permits for shipment, a shipping case, sealing of the shipping case, and applicable Federal taxes) and costs of transporting the remains to the place of burial.

(2) A reasonable transportation expense is an expense that is usual and customary in the context of burial transportation, with a corresponding charge that is the usual and customary charge made to the general public for the same or similar services.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2303, 2308)

BURIAL BENEFITS: OTHER

§ 3.1710 Escheat (payment of burial benefits to an estate with no heirs).

VA will not pay burial benefits if the payment would escheat (that is, would be turned over to the State because there are no heirs to the estate of the person to whom such benefits would be paid).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

§ 3.1711 Effect of contributions by government, public, or private organizations.

(a) *Contributions by government or employer.* With respect to claims for a plot or interment allowance under § 3.1707, if VA has evidence that the U.S., a State, any agency or political subdivision of the U.S. or of a State, or the employer of the deceased veteran has paid or contributed payment to the veteran's plot or interment expenses, VA will pay the claimant up to the lesser of:

(1) The allowable statutory amount; or

(2) The amount of the total plot or interment expenses minus the amount of expenses paid by any or all of the organizations described in this paragraph (a).

(b) *Burial expenses paid by other agencies of the U.S.* (1) *Burial allowance when Federal law or regulation also provides for payment.* VA cannot pay the non-service-connected burial allowance when any Federal law or regulation also specifically provides for the payment of the deceased veteran's burial, funeral, or transportation expenses. However, VA will pay the non-service-

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connected burial allowance when a Federal law or regulation allows the payment of burial expenses using funds due, or accrued to the credit of, the deceased veteran (such as Social Security benefits), but the law or regulation does not specifically require such payment. In such cases, VA will pay the maximum amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2302.

(2) *Payment by military service department.* VA will not pay or will recoup the non-service-connected burial allowance for deaths occurring during active service or for other deaths for which the service department pays the burial, funeral, or transportation expenses.

(3) *When a veteran dies while hospitalized.* When a veteran dies while hospitalized at the expense of the U.S. government (including, but not limited to, death in a VA facility) and benefits would be otherwise payable under 10 U.S.C. 1482 and a provision of this subpart B, only one of these benefits is payable. VA will attempt to locate a relative of the veteran or another person entitled to reimbursement under §3.1702(b) and will ask that person to elect between these benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302, 2303(b))

§ 3.1712 Effect of forfeiture on payment of burial benefits.

(a) *Forfeiture for fraud.* VA will pay burial benefits, if otherwise in order, based on a deceased veteran who forfeited his or her right to receive benefits due to fraud under §3.901, Fraud. However, VA will not pay burial benefits to a claimant who participated in fraudulent activity that resulted in forfeiture under §3.901.

(b) *Forfeiture for treasonable acts or for subversive activity.* VA will not pay burial benefits based on a period of service commencing before the date of commission of the offense if either the veteran or the claimant has forfeited the right to all benefits except insurance payments under §3.902, Forfeiture for treasonable acts, or §3.903, Forfeiture for subversive activities, because of a treasonable act or subversive activities, unless the offense was pardoned by the President of the U.S.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103, 6104, 6105)

Cross Reference: §3.1(aa), for the definition of "fraud."

§ 3.1713 Eligibility based on status before 1958.

When any person dies who had a status under any law in effect on December 31, 1957, that afforded entitlement to burial benefits, burial benefits will be paid, if otherwise in order, even though such status does not meet the service requirements of 38 U.S.C. chapter 23.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2305)

Subpart C [Reserved]

Subpart D—Universal Adjudication Rules That Apply to Benefit Claims Governed by Part 3 of This Title

AUTHORITY: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 66 FR 18195, Apr. 6, 2001, unless otherwise noted.

GENERAL

§ 3.2100 Scope of Applicability.

Unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this subpart apply only to claims governed by part 3 of this title.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

§ 3.2130 Will VA accept a signature by mark or thumbprint?

VA will accept signatures by mark or thumbprint if:

(a) They are witnessed by two people who sign their names and give their addresses, or

(b) They are witnessed by an accredited agent, attorney, or service organization representative, or

(c) They are certified by a notary public or any other person having the authority to administer oaths for general purposes, or

(d) They are certified by a VA employee who has been delegated authority by the Secretary under 38 CFR 2.3.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101).

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§ 3.2400 Applicability of modernized review system.

(a) *Applicability.* The modernized review system defined in 38 CFR 19.2(b) applies to all claims, requests for reopening of finally adjudicated claims, and requests for revision based on clear and unmistakable error:

(1) For which VA issues notice of an initial decision on or after the effective date of the modernized review system as provided in 38 CFR 19.2(a); or

(2) Where a claimant has elected review of a legacy claim under the modernized review system as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) *Legacy claims.* A legacy claim is a claim, or request for reopening or revision of a finally adjudicated claim, for which VA provided notice of a decision prior to the effective date of the modernized review system and the claimant has not elected to participate in the modernized review system as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) *Election into the modernized review system.* For claims governed by this part, pursuant to election by a claimant, the modernized review system applies where:

(1) *Rapid appeals modernization program election.* A claimant with a legacy appeal elects to opt-in to the modernized review system on or after November 1, 2017, as part of a program authorized by the Secretary pursuant to section 4 of Public Law 115-55; or

(2) *Election after receiving a statement of the case.* A claimant with a legacy appeal elects to opt-in to the modernized review system, following issuance, on or after the effective date of the modernized system, of a VA Statement of the Case or Supplemental Statement of the Case, by filing for a review option under the new system in accordance with § 3.2500 on a form prescribed by the Secretary within the time allowed for filing a substantive appeal under 38 CFR 19.52(b) and other applicable provisions in part 19 of this chapter.

(d) *Effect of election.* Once an eligible claimant elects the modernized review system with respect to a particular claim, the provisions of 38 CFR parts 3, 19, and 20 applicable only to legacy

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claims and appeals no longer apply to that claim.

[84 FR 171, Jan. 18, 2019, as amended at 84 FR 4336, Feb. 15, 2019]

§ 3.2500 Review of decisions.

(a) *Reviews available.* (1) Within one year from the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a notice of a decision on a claim or issue as defined in § 3.151(c), except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (c), (e), and (f) of this section, a claimant may elect one of the following administrative review options by timely filing the appropriate form prescribed by the Secretary:

(i) A request for higher-level review under § 3.2601 or

(ii) An appeal to the Board under § 20.202 of this chapter.

(2) At any time after VA issues notice of a decision on an issue within a claim, a claimant may file a supplemental claim under § 3.2501.

(b) *Concurrent election prohibited.* With regard to the adjudication of a claim or an issue as defined in § 3.151(c), a claimant who has filed for review under one of the options available under paragraph (a) of this section may not, while that review is pending final adjudication, file for review under a different available option. While the adjudication of a specific benefit is pending on appeal before a federal court, a claimant may not file for administrative review of the claim under any of options listed in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) *Continuously pursued issues.* A claimant may continuously pursue a claim or an issue by timely and properly filing one of the following administrative review options, as specified (except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (c), (e), and (f) of this section), after any decision by the agency of original jurisdiction, Board of Veterans' Appeals, or by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, provided that any appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims is timely filed as determined by the court:

(1) Following notice of a decision on an initial claim or a supplemental claim, the claimant may file a supplemental claim, request a higher-level

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review, or appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(2) Following notice of a decision on a higher-level review, the claimant may file a supplemental claim or appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. (See appeal to the Board, 38 CFR 20.202).

(3) Following notice of a decision on an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the claimant may file a supplemental claim or file a notice of appeal to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

(4) Following a decision on an appeal to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the claimant may file a supplemental claim.

(d) *Voluntary withdrawal.* A claimant may withdraw a supplemental claim or a request for a higher-level review at any time before VA renders a decision on the issue. A claimant must submit in writing or through electronic submission in a manner prescribed by the Secretary any notice of withdrawal of an issue under the selected review option to the agency of original jurisdiction. The withdrawal will be effective the date VA receives it. A claimant may withdraw an appeal to the Board of Veteran's Appeals as prescribed in § 20.205.

(e) *Changing review options while a review is pending adjudication—(1) Within one year of prior decision notice.* A claimant may change the review option selected by withdrawing the request as prescribed in § 3.2500(d) and filing the appropriate application for the requested review option within one year from the date on which VA issued notice of a decision on an issue.

(2) *More than one year after notice of a decision.* A claimant may change the review option selected to a supplemental claim after expiration of one-year following the date on which VA issued a notice of decision on an issue by following the procedure specified in paragraph (e)(1) of this section. Where VA receives the supplemental claim application after expiration of the one-year period, continuous pursuit of the claim will be broken and VA will apply the effective date provisions under paragraph (h)(2) of this section, unless VA grants an extension of the one-year period for good cause shown under

§ 3.109(b) and the supplemental claim application is received within the extension period allowed.

(f) *Applicability.* This section applies to claims and requests under the modernized review system as set forth in § 3.2400, with the exception that a supplemental claim may not be filed in connection with a denial of a request to revise a final decision of the agency of original jurisdiction based on clear and unmistakable error.

(g) *Review of simultaneously contested claims.* Notwithstanding other provisions of this part, a party to a simultaneously contested claim may only seek administrative review of a decision by the agency of original jurisdiction on such claim by filing an appeal to the Board as prescribed in § 20.402 of this chapter within 60 days of the date VA issues notice of the decision on the claim. (See contested claims, 38 CFR 20.402).

(h) *Effective dates—(1) Continuously pursued claims.* Except as otherwise provided by other provisions of this part, including § 3.400, the effective date will be fixed in accordance with the date of receipt of the initial claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later, if a claimant continuously pursues an issue by timely filing in succession any of the available review options as specified in paragraph (c) of this section within one year of the issuance of the decision (or the time period specified in paragraph (f) of this section, as applicable to simultaneously contested claims), provided that any appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims must be accepted as timely by that court.

(2) *Supplemental claims received more than one year after notice of decision.* Except as otherwise provided in this section, for supplemental claims received more than one year after the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues notice of a decision or the Board of Veterans' Appeals issued notice of a decision, the effective date will be fixed in accordance with the date entitlement arose, but will not be earlier than the date of receipt of the supplemental claim.

[84 FR 171, Jan. 18, 2019, as amended at 84 FR 4336, Feb. 15, 2019; 84 FR 54033, Oct. 9, 2019]

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§ 3.2501 Supplemental claims.

Except as otherwise provided, a claimant or his or her authorized representative, if any, who disagrees with a prior VA decision may file a supplemental claim (see § 3.1(p)(2)) by submitting in writing or electronically a complete application (see § 3.160(a)) on a form prescribed by the Secretary any time after the agency of original jurisdiction issues notice of a decision, regardless of whether the claim is pending (see § 3.160(c)) or has become finally adjudicated (see § 3.160(d)). If new and relevant evidence is presented or secured with respect to the supplemental claim, the agency of original jurisdiction will readjudicate the claim taking into consideration all of the evidence of record. If new and relevant evidence is not presented or secured, the agency of original jurisdiction will issue a decision finding that there was insufficient evidence to readjudicate the claim. In determining whether new and relevant evidence is presented or secured, VA will consider any VA treatment records reasonably identified by the claimant and any evidence received by VA after VA issued notice of a decision on the claim and while the evidentiary record was closed (see 3.103(c)).

(a) *New and relevant evidence.* The new and relevant standard will not impose a higher evidentiary threshold than the previous new and material evidence standard under § 3.156(a).

(1) *Definition.* New evidence is evidence not previously part of the actual record before agency adjudicators. Relevant evidence is information that tends to prove or disprove a matter at issue in a claim. Relevant evidence includes evidence that raises a theory of entitlement that was not previously addressed.

(2) *Receipt prior to notice of a decision.* New and relevant evidence received before VA issues its decision on a supplemental claim will be considered as having been filed in connection with the claim.

(b) *Evidentiary record.* The evidentiary record for a supplemental claim includes all evidence received by VA before VA issues notice of a decision on the supplemental claim. For VA to readjudicate the claim, the evi-

dentiary record must include new and relevant evidence that was not of record as of the date of notice of the prior decision.

(c) *Duty to assist.* Upon receipt of a substantially complete supplemental claim, VA's duty to assist in the gathering of evidence under § 3.159 of this part is triggered and includes any such assistance that may help secure new and relevant evidence as defined in paragraph (a) of this section to complete the supplemental claim application.

(d) *Date of filing.* The filing date of a supplemental claim is determined according to § 3.155, with the exception of the intent to file rule found in § 3.155(b) which applies to initial claims.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5103A(h), 5108)

[83 FR 172, Jan. 18, 2019]

§ 3.2502 Return by higher-level adjudicator or remand by the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Upon receipt of a returned claim from a higher-level adjudicator or remand by the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the agency of original jurisdiction will expeditiously readjudicate the claim in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5109B. The agency of original jurisdiction retains jurisdiction of the claim. In readjudicating the claim, the agency of original jurisdiction will correct all identified duty to assist errors, complete a new decision and issue notice to the claimant and or his or her legal representative in accordance with 3.103(f). The effective date of any evaluation and award of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation will be determined in accordance with the date of receipt of the initial claim as prescribed under § 3.2500(g).

[84 FR 172, Jan. 18, 2019]

REVISIONS

§ 3.2600 Legacy review of benefit claims decisions.

This section applies only to legacy claims as defined in § 3.2400 in which a Notice of Disagreement is timely filed on or after June 1, 2001, under regulations applicable at the time of filing.

(a) A claimant who has filed a Notice of Disagreement submitted in accordance with the provisions of § 20.201 of this chapter, and either § 20.302(a) or § 20.501(a) of this chapter, as applicable, with a decision of an agency of original jurisdiction on a benefit claim has a right to a review of that decision under this section. The review will be conducted by a Veterans Service Center Manager, Pension Management Center Manager, or Decision Review Officer, at VA's discretion. An individual who did not participate in the decision being reviewed will conduct this review. Only a decision that has not yet become final (by appellate decision or failure to timely appeal) may be reviewed. Review under this section will encompass only decisions with which the claimant has expressed disagreement in the Notice of Disagreement. The reviewer will consider all evidence of record and applicable law, and will give no deference to the decision being reviewed.

(b) Unless the claimant has requested review under this section with his or her Notice of Disagreement, VA will, upon receipt of the Notice of Disagreement, notify the claimant in writing of his or her right to a review under this section. To obtain such a review, the claimant must request it not later than 60 days after the date VA mails the notice. This 60-day time limit may not be extended. If the claimant fails to request review under this section not later than 60 days after the date VA mails the notice, VA will proceed with the traditional appellate process by issuing a Statement of the Case. A claimant may not have more than one review under this section of the same decision.

(c) The reviewer may conduct whatever development he or she considers necessary to resolve any disagreements in the Notice of Disagreement, consistent with applicable law. This may include an attempt to obtain additional evidence or the holding of an informal conference with the claimant. Upon the request of the claimant, the reviewer will conduct a hearing under the version of § 3.103(c) of this chapter predating Public Law 115-55.

(d) The reviewer may grant a benefit sought in the claim notwithstanding

§ 3.105(b), but, except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, may not revise the decision in a manner that is less advantageous to the claimant than the decision under review. A review decision made under this section will include a summary of the evidence, a citation to pertinent laws, a discussion of how those laws affect the decision, and a summary of the reasons for the decision.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the reviewer may reverse or revise (even if disadvantageous to the claimant) prior decisions of an agency of original jurisdiction (including the decision being reviewed or any prior decision that has become final due to failure to timely appeal) on the grounds of clear and unmistakable error (see § 3.105(a)).

(f) Review under this section does not limit the appeal rights of a claimant. Unless a claimant withdraws his or her Notice of Disagreement as a result of this review process, VA will proceed with the traditional appellate process by issuing a Statement of the Case.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5109A and 7105(d))

[66 FR 21874, May 2, 2001, as amended at 67 FR 46868, July 17, 2002; 74 FR 26959, June 5, 2009; 79 FR 57697, Sept. 25, 2014; 84 FR 172, Jan. 18, 2019; 84 FR 4336, Feb. 15, 2019]

§ 3.2601 Higher-level review.

(a) *Applicability.* This section applies to all claims under the modernized review system, with the exception of simultaneously contested claims.

(b) *Requirements for election.* A claimant who is dissatisfied with a decision by the agency of original jurisdiction may file a request for higher-level review in accordance with § 3.2500, by submitting a complete request for review on a form prescribed by the Secretary.

(c) *Complete request.* A complete request for higher-level review is a submission of a request on a form prescribed by the Secretary, whether paper or electronic, that meets the following requirements:

(1) A complete request must provide the name of the claimant and the relationship to the veteran, if applicable;

(2) A complete request must be signed by the claimant or a person legally authorized to sign for the claimant; and

(3) A complete request must specify the date of the underlying decision for which review is requested and specify the issues for which review is requested.

(d) *Filing period.* A complete request for higher-level review must be received by VA within one year of the date of VA's issuance of the notice of the decision. If VA receives an incomplete request form, VA will notify the claimant and the claimant's representative, if any, of the information necessary to complete the request form prescribed by the Secretary. If a complete request is submitted within 60 days of the date of the VA notification of such incomplete request or prior to the expiration of the one-year filing period, VA will consider it filed as of the date VA received the incomplete application form that did not meet the standards of a complete request.

(e) *Who may conduct a higher-level review.* Higher-level review will be conducted by an experienced adjudicator who did not participate in the prior decision. Selection of a higher-level adjudicator to conduct a higher-level review is at VA's discretion. As a general rule, an adjudicator in an office other than the office that rendered the prior decision will conduct the higher-level review. An exception to this rule applies for claims requiring specialized processing, such as where there is only one office that handles adjudication of a particular type of entitlement. A claimant may request that the office that rendered the prior decision conduct the higher-level review, and VA will grant the request in the absence of good cause to deny such as when processing is centralized at one office within the agency of original jurisdiction or when the office that rendered the prior decision does not have higher-level review personnel available to conduct the review.

(f) *Evidentiary record.* The evidentiary record in a higher-level review is limited to the evidence of record as of the date the agency of original jurisdiction issued notice of the prior decision under review and the higher-level adjudicator may not consider additional evidence. The higher-level adjudicator may not order development of additional evidence that may be relevant to

the claim under review, except as provided in paragraph (g) of this section.

(g) *Duty to assist errors.* The higher-level adjudicator will ensure that VA complied with its statutory duty to assist (see §3.159) in gathering evidence applicable prior to issuance of the decision being reviewed. If the higher-level adjudicator both identifies a duty to assist error that existed at the time of VA's decision on the claim under review and cannot grant the maximum benefit for the claim, the higher-level adjudicator must return the claim for correction of the error and readjudication. Upon receipt, the agency of jurisdiction will expeditiously readjudicate the claim in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5109B.

(1) For disability evaluations, the *maximum benefit* means the highest schedular evaluation allowed by law and regulation for the issue under review.

(2) For ancillary benefits, the *maximum benefit* means the granting of the benefit sought.

(3) For pension benefits or dependents indemnity compensation, the *maximum benefit* means granting the highest benefit payable.

(h) *Informal conferences.* A claimant or his or her representative may include a request for an informal conference with a request for higher-level review. For purposes of this section, *informal conference* means contact with a claimant's representative or, if not represented, with the claimant, telephonically, or as otherwise determined by VA, for the sole purpose of allowing the claimant or representative to identify any errors of law or fact in a prior decision based on the record at the time the decision was issued. If requested, VA will make reasonable efforts to contact the claimant and/or the authorized representative to conduct one informal conference during a higher-level review, but if such reasonable efforts are not successful, a decision may be issued in the absence of an informal conference. The higher-level adjudicator with determinative authority over the issue will conduct the informal conference, absent exceptional circumstances. VA will not receive any new evidence or introduction of facts

not present at the time of the prior decision or apart of the evidentiary record in support of the higher-level review during the informal conference in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section. Any expenses incurred by the claimant in connection with the informal conference are the responsibility of the claimant.

(i) *De novo review.* The higher-level adjudicator will consider only those decisions and claims for which the claimant has requested higher-level review, and will conduct a de novo review giving no deference to the prior decision, except as provided in §3.104(c).

(j) *Difference of opinion.* The higher-level adjudicator may grant a benefit sought in the claim under review based on a difference of opinion (see §3.105(b)). However, any finding favorable to the claimant is binding except as provided in §3.104(c) of this part. In addition, the higher-level adjudicator will not revise the outcome in a manner that is less advantageous to the claimant based solely on a difference of opinion. The higher-level adjudicator may reverse or revise (even if disadvantageous to the claimant) prior decisions by VA (including the decision being reviewed or any prior decision) on the grounds of clear and unmistakable error under §3.105(a)(1) or (a)(2), as applicable, depending on whether the prior decision is finally adjudicated.

(k) *Notice requirements.* Notice of a decision made under this section will include all of the elements described in §3.103(f), a general statement indicating whether evidence submitted while the record was closed was not considered, and notice of the options available to have such evidence considered.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5109A and 7105(d))

[84 FR 173, Jan. 18, 2019]

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