

Veterans Corner
June 2008
By: Robert G. Mitchell

How to apply for disability compensation from VA

Like other veterans, OEF/OIF War veterans with service connected illness or injuries are eligible for monthly payments, called disability compensation. The disability must have been incurred or aggravated during active military service. Furthermore, the military service of the veteran must have been terminated through separation or discharge under conditions that were other than dishonorable.

Disability compensation varies according to the degree of disability and the number of dependents. Benefits are not subject to Federal or state income tax. Receipt of military retirement pay, disability severance pay, and separation incentive payments, known as SSB and VSI (Special Separation Benefits and Voluntary Separation Incentives), also affects the amount of VA compensation paid.

Disability ratings range from 0 to 100 percent (in increments of 10%). For example, in 2008, a veteran with a disability rating of 10% receives \$117 per month; a veteran with disability rating of 50% gets \$728 per month; and a veteran who is totally disabled and evaluated at 100% receives \$2527 monthly.

Veterans with disability ratings between 30 and 100 percent also are eligible for monthly allowances for each dependent. (The amount depends on the disability rating).

A veteran who either is in need of regular aid and attendance of another person (including the veteran's spouse), or who is permanently housebound may be entitled to additional benefits. VA must make that determination before the veteran can get these benefits. For more information call the Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency at 518-884-4115.

Five years of VA Health Care for Combat Veterans

Military veterans who served in combat since 11 November 1998, including veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now eligible for five years of free medical care for most conditions from the VA. This measure increases a two-year limit that has been in effect nearly a decade, and has no effect on veterans with medical conditions related to their military service. Veterans may apply at any time after their discharge from the military for medical care for service-connected health problems. The expanded benefit is part of the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) signed by President Bush in January and applies to care in a VA hospital, outpatient clinic or nursing home. It also extends VA dental benefit availability from 90 to 180 days after discharge.

Where to get help

OIF and OEF veterans with concerns about their health should contact the VA medical Center. Medical care is available, and a Gulf War registry examination is also available on request for OIF veterans. Call the VA Medical Center for an appointment at 518-626-5000.

One Stop Career Centers

Veterans can find the services they need at a convenient One-Stop Career Center where they can work with a Veterans' Employment Specialist to find jobs, acquire skills and education, plan careers, attend workshops, and take advantage of the resources. Contact Tom Harris at the Saratoga county One-Stop Career Center at 518-884-4170.

Military Day at the Saratoga Race Track

Veterans and Military Organizations that would like to participate in Military Day at the Saratoga Race course on August 27, 2008 should contact Ed Lewi Assoc. (Kate) at 518-383-6183.