

THE DENTON COUNTY VETERAN

January 2007



Denton County was established by the Texas legislature on April 11, 1846

County Judge Mary Horn, Commissioner Cynthia White, Precinct 1;
Commissioner Ron Marchant, Precinct 2; Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell, Precinct 3;
Commissioner Andy Eads, Precinct 4

Serving the Veterans of Denton County

Secretary Nicholson: VA Reaches Out to Veterans and Spouses

“Aid and Attendance” an Under-Used Benefit

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform wartime veterans and surviving spouses of deceased wartime veterans about an under-used, special monthly pension benefit called Aid and Attendance.

“Veterans have earned this benefit by their service to our nation,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. “We want to ensure that every veteran or surviving spouse who qualifies has the chance to apply.”

Although this is not a new program, not everyone is aware of his or her potential eligibility. The Aid and Attendance pension benefit may be available to wartime veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care or who live in nursing-homes or assisted-living facilities.

Many elderly veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement.

To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self support and in need of regular personal assistance.

The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one’s own bodily needs. People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment.

For a wartime veteran or surviving spouse to qualify for this special monthly pension, the veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Wartime veterans who entered active duty on or after September 8, 1980, (October 16, 1981, for officers) must have completed at least 24 continuous months of military service or the period for which they were ordered to active duty.

If all requirements are met, VA determines eligibility for the Aid and Attendance benefit by adjusting for un-reimbursed medical expenses from the veteran’s or surviving spouse’s total household income. If the remaining income amount falls below the annual income threshold for the Aid and Attendance benefit, VA pays the difference between the claimant’s household income and the Aid and Attendance threshold.

The Aid and Attendance income threshold for a veteran without dependents is now \$18,234 annually. The threshold increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent, and by \$1,866 for each additional dependent. The annual Aid and Attendance threshold for a surviving spouse alone is \$11,715. This threshold increases to \$13,976 if there is one dependent child, and by \$1,866 for each additional child. Additional information and assistance in applying for the Aid and Attendance benefit may be obtained by calling 1-800-827-1000. Applications may be submitted on-line at <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. Information is also available on the Internet at www.va.gov or from any local veterans service organization.

Flying the American Flag at Half Staff

When should the flag be flown at half-staff?

An easy way to remember when to fly the United States flag at half-staff is to consider when the whole nation is in mourning.

These periods of mourning are proclaimed either by the president of the United States, for national remembrance, or the governor of a state or territory, for local remembrance, in the event of a death of a member or former member of the federal, state or territorial government or judiciary. The heads of departments and agencies of the federal government may also order that the flag be flown at half-staff on buildings, grounds and naval vessels under their jurisdiction.

On Memorial Day the flag

should be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon only, then raised briskly to the top of the staff until sunset, in honor of the nation's battle heroes. In the early days of our country, no regulations existed for flying the flag at half-staff and, as a result, there were many conflicting policies. But on March 1, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower issued a proclamation on the

proper times.

The flag should fly at half-staff for 30 days at all federal buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and its territories and possessions after the death of the president or a former president. It is to fly 10 days at half-staff after the death of the vice president, the chief

justice or a retired chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, or the speaker of the House of Representatives. For an associate justice of the Supreme Court, a member of the Cabinet, a former vice president, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the majority leader of the

House of Representatives, or the minority leader of the House of Representatives the flag is to be displayed at half-staff from the day of death until interment.

The flag is to be flown at half-staff at all federal buildings, grounds and naval vessels in the Washington, D.C., area on the day and day after the death of a United States senator, representative, territorial delegate, or the

resident commissioner from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It should also be flown at half-staff on all federal facilities in the state, congressional district, territory, or commonwealth of these officials.

Upon the death of the governor of a state, territory or possession, the flag should be flown at half-staff on all federal facilities in that governor's state, territory or possession from the day of death until interment.

The president may order the flag to be flown at half-staff to mark the death of other officials, former officials, or foreign dignitaries. In addition to these occasions, the president may order half-staff display of the flag after other tragic events.

The flag should be briskly run up to the top of the staff before being lowered slowly to the half-staff position.



Facts About the 1973 St. Louis Fire and Lost Records

The National Archives and Records Administration is the official depository for records of military personnel separated from the U. S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The records are housed in three locations: the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Md., and the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Mo.

The NPRC Military Personnel Records section in St. Louis contains records relating to:

- Army officers separated after June 30, 1917, and enlisted Army personnel separated after October 31, 1912.
- Air Force officers and enlisted personnel separated after September 24, 1947.
- Naval officers separated after 1902, and naval enlisted personnel separated after 1885.
- Marine Corps officers and enlisted separated after 1904.
- U.S. Coast Guard and predecessor agency Revenue Cutter Service, Life-Saving Service and Lighthouse Service officers and enlisted separated after 1897.

The Fire

A fire at the NPRC in St. Louis on July 12, 1973, destroyed about 80 percent of the records for Army personnel discharged between November 1, 1912, and January 1, 1960. About 75 percent of the records for Air Force personnel with surnames from "Hubbard" through "Z" discharged between September 25, 1947, and January 1, 1964, were also destroyed.

What Was Lost

It is hard to determine exactly what was lost in the fire, because:

- There were no indices to the blocks of records involved. The records were merely filed in alphabetical order for the following groups:

World War I:

Army
November 1, 1912 - September 7, 1939

World War II:

Army
September 8, 1939 - December 31, 1946

Post World War II:

Army
January 1, 1947 - December 31, 1959
Air Force
September 25, 1947 - December 31, 1963

Millions of records, especially medical records, had been withdrawn from all three groups and loaned to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) before the fire. The fact that one's records are not in NPRC files at a particular time does not mean the records were destroyed in the fire.

Reconstruction of Lost Records

If veterans learn that their records may have been lost in the fire, they may send photocopies of any documents they possess -- especially separation documents -- to the NPRC. The address is National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. The submitted documents will be used, when necessary, to aid in finding alternate sources supporting the requester's claim. The NPRC will add those documents to the computerized index or to the existing recovered/reconstructed record and file them permanently.

Alternate Sources of Military Service Data

When veterans don't have copies of their military records and their NPRC files may have been lost in the St. Louis fire, essential information about their military service may be available from a number of other sources.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) maintains records on veterans whose military records were affected by the fire if the veteran or a beneficiary filed a claim before July 1973.
- Service information may also be found in various kinds of "organizational" records such as unit morning reports, payrolls and military orders on file at the NPRC or other National Archives and Records Administration facilities.
- There also is a great deal of information available in records of the State Adjutants General, and other state "veterans services" offices.

(continued on page 6)

For Local Help	940-349-2950
Denton County Veterans Service Office	Fax: 940-349-2951
1505 E. McKinney St. #183	Monday through Friday
Denton, TX 76209	8:00 AM to Noon
	1:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Facts About the 1973 St. Louis Fire and Lost Records

By using alternate sources, NPRC often can reconstruct a veteran's beginning and ending dates of active service, the character of service, rank, time lost on active duty, and periods of hospitalization. NPRC can issue NA Form 13038, "Certification of Military Service," considered the equivalent of a Form DD-214, "Report of Separation From Active Duty," to use in establishing eligibility for veterans benefits.

Necessary Information for File Reconstruction

The key to reconstructing military data is to give the NPRC enough specific information so the staff can properly search the various sources. The following information is normally required:

- Full name used during military service
- Branch of service
- Approximate dates of service
- Service number or Social Security number
- Place of entry into service
- Last unit of assignment
- Place of discharge

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/index.asp>

