



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
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Director

WHAT IS VA PENSION?

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

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

You may be eligible if:

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

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

HOW MUCH DOES VA PAY?

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

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

For more info, please call the Dept. of Veterans Affairs at (800)827-1000

Van Transportation...

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

For more details call:
270-2760.



VETERANS CRISIS LINE

1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

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

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

SURVIVORS PENSION

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

Eligibility

The deceased Veteran must have met the following service requirements:

- For service on or before September 7, 1980, the Veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, with at least one day during a wartime period.
- If he or she entered active duty after September 7, 1980, generally he or she must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty with at least one day during a wartime period.
- Was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions.

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

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

- Under 18, OR
- Under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, OR
- Permanently incapable of self-support due to a disability before age 18

Your yearly family income must be less than the amount set by Congress to qualify for the Survivors Pension benefit.

New York State Blind Annuity Program

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

Eligibility:

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

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

Acceptable documents include:

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

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

For more info, please call NYS DVS Blind Annuity Office at (518) 486-3602.



SCHAGHTICOKE, NY | 2022

Memorial Day Weekend May 27-30, 2022

Hoosic Valley Central School
Schaghticoke, NY 12154

The Event

May 27 - 30, 2022, Hoosic Valley Central School will host its inaugural Field of Honor[®] as a tribute to our veterans and military service personnel. This inspirational posting of the Stars and Stripes will feature flags arranged in a solemn formation to honor the military heroes in our lives. Flags are 3' x 5' and mounted on a 7½' pole. Each will be identified with an honoree's name and tribute.

The panorama of red, white and blue is hard to adequately describe but, once experienced, it will not be forgotten. There will be no charge to visit the Field of Honor[®] display. Everyone is invited to walk through the ordered rows of flags, converse with veterans and reflect.

Flags will be delivered in bulk and installed by volunteers prior to the opening ceremony. At the close of the event on May 30, purchasers will pick up their flags from noon to 5pm and display them in their own communities as a tribute to veterans and a memento of this awe-inspiring event.

Benefiting Charity

All proceeds go to Patriot Flight Inc., a not-for-profit organization that will fly our local veterans to Washington, DC. They will visit their memorials and reflect on their service, sacrifices and memories.

How You Can Participate

Help make this event successful.

- Flags can be purchased for \$40 each and will be dedicated to a veteran or military person. Visit: www.healingfield.org/schaghticokeny22 or scan the QR code for purchases and details.



- Volunteers are needed to assemble and install the flags, assist as visitors locate the flags they purchased, supervise throughout the weekend, assist in the Kids Booth and more.
- Financial and in-kind sponsorships and donations are needed. Preparation and running the event will require portable lighting, a sound system, stage, tents, food for volunteers and so much more.

For more information contact:

Marilou Pudiak-Town, Event Chair
(518) 423-5281 mpudiak@nycap.rr.com

Lauren Van Buren, Event Co-Chair
(518) 894-6109 lauren.m.effinger@gmail.com

This is an event not to be missed!

A Message from the County Executive

Winter is almost behind us and spring is approaching. There are new reminders of the need to be constantly vigilant in our defense of freedom and the role played by our military today and our veterans in previous years. Rensselaer County will never forget the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families, particularly given the current times we face.

Rensselaer County has worked to expand our support for veterans. We worked with Hudson Valley Community College and Assemblyman Jake Ashby to locate the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Program in the campus center at Hudson Valley to offer support, counseling and service to our veterans. In January, we also attended the opening of the new Disabled American Veterans office at the Riverview Center (former Montgomery Wards) in Menands. We welcome these new resources.

As always, our Veteran Service Agency remains ready, willing and able to serve you and your family. As we watch trouble unfold around the world, we acknowledge with gratitude the enormous service of our veterans and their families. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Steven F. McLaughlin

Upcoming Events:



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

March 14th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

Joseph M. Spairana, Sr., USA, CPL-WWII

April 11th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

Henry E. Leavitt, USA, T/4-WWII

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

Armand J. Mancuso, USA,PFC-Korea

May 27th-30th...Field of Honor in Schaghticoke, NY

May 29th....Memorial Day Parade in Rensselaer, ceremony at 1pm, step-off at 2pm