



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

November 2019

IS A RESERVE VET A VETERAN?

Most people are confused about this question in terms of VA benefits. Reservists might be unsure of their status as a veteran and others who have only served for short periods in active duty might feel like they're not a veteran at all.

Following are the definitions of the terms involved in this question: reservist and veteran.

A reservist refers to someone who has served in the National Guard or Reserves of a military branch. A veteran refers to someone who has served on active duty in one of the military branches. Both must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

This may seem simple, but there are a few caveats. When determining your status as either a reservist or a veteran, especially in terms of benefits, you'll need to understand the following terms:

Full-Time - Full-time is basically synonymous with active duty. When you're on active duty, this means you're on call 24/7 with the exclusion of leave or a pass. Active duty service members are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Defense and serve in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Active duty or full-time service is creditable toward length-of-service requirements for VA benefits and these individuals are called veterans once they leave the service with a discharge status other than dishonorable.

Part-Time - Part-time means you're part of the National Guard or the Reserves. Individuals serving part-time perform duties one weekend per month and two training periods per year. Yet, since 1990 and the Gulf War, the National Guard and Reserves often put in closer to full-time hours, hence some confusion about status.

Reserves - Each branch of the military has a reserve sector to perform supplementary duties when necessary. They are all under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Defense.

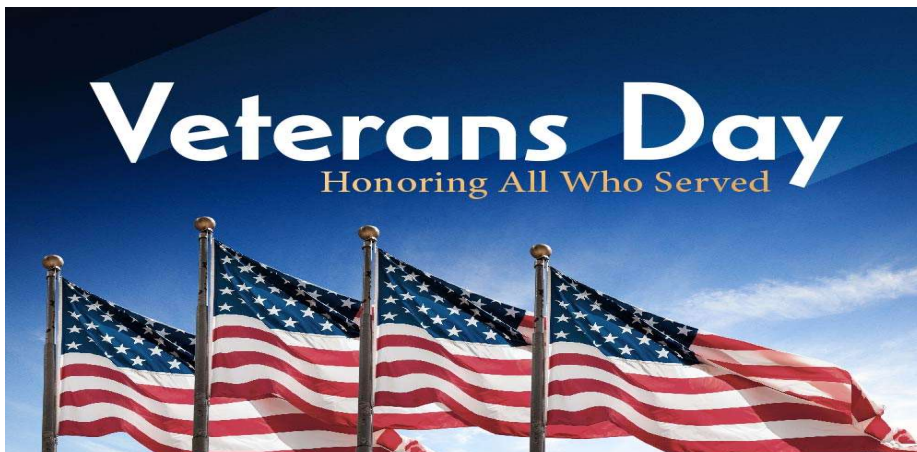
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**"Patriotism is not short,
frenzied outbursts of
emotion, but the tran-
quil and steady dedica-
tion of a lifetime."**

Adali Stevenson

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When joining the Reserves, individuals complete basic training and full-time military school before returning to civilian life. Those serving in the Reserves are not considered to be on active duty in terms of VA benefits, with one exception. If the President or the Secretary of Defense request additional support from the Reserves, they will be put on active duty which does count toward VA benefits and those reservists can call themselves veterans if they're discharged with a status other than dishonorable.

National Guard - The National Guard is similar to the Reserves with the main difference being that the National Guard is under the jurisdiction of individual states and the Reserves belong to the federal government. There are only two types of National Guard: Army National Guard and Air National Guard. Both units attend basic training, full-time military school, and are on-duty one weekend per month, similar to that of individuals in the Reserves. If a state of emergency arises, state governments often call the National Guard to active duty. But, unfortunately, this doesn't count toward VA benefits as this form of work is called state duty or a Title 38 Call-Up. On the other hand, if the federal government calls on the National Guard to provide active duty contingency military operations in what's called federal duty or a Title 10 Call-Up, this does count toward VA benefits. If an individual in the National Guard performs federal duty, they can call themselves a veteran after they are discharged, so long as their status is other than dishonorable.

Active Guard/Reserves - There is another program within the military called Active Guard/Reserves (AGR) where members of the Reserves and National Guard perform full-time duty and are on-call 24/7. AGR individuals provide daily operational support so that they are ready to mobilize at any time. As for VA benefits, AGR members are similar to full time or active duty service members and can be called a veteran if they are no longer in the military but served in an active duty capacity with other than dishonorable discharge.

Individual Ready Reserve - When serving in the military, your contract lasts at least eight years. In general, an individual will serve their first four years in active duty or in the National Guard/Reserves. From there, they'll often spend the remaining four years in the inactive reserves, otherwise known as the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). Unlike the National Guard and the Reserves, those in IRR don't participate in weekend drills or other training and don't get paid. Yet, they're still required to be available to support military endeavors when needed. Unless the President or Secretary of Defense calls an IRR individual to active duty, their time spent in IRR does not count toward VA benefits. But, if you performed active duty before being transferred to the IRR, you are still considered a veteran.

Anyone eligible for reserve component retirement benefits is considered a veteran. Those who have reached 20 years of service, even if they were never activated on a federal order for more than 180 days outside of training, is considered a veteran. However, they are not entitled to any additional retirement benefits. They are basically given the ability to be officially honored as a veteran.



National Gratitude Month

Gratitude is more than simply saying "thank you." Gratitude's amazing powers have the ability to shift us from focusing on the negative to appreciating what is positive in our lives. Practicing daily gratitude gives us a deeper connection to ourselves, the world around us and to our Creator.

Everything in our lives has the ability to improve when we are grateful. Research has shown that gratitude can enhance our moods, decrease stress and drastically improve our overall level of health and wellbeing. On average, grateful people tend to have fewer stress-related illnesses and experience less depression and lowered blood pressure, they are more physically fit, they are happier, have a higher income, more satisfying personal and professional relationships and will be better liked. Grateful kids are even more likely to get A's in school.

If everyone practiced daily gratitude, we could change ourselves and the planet for the better. Everyone would be much happier. Love would grow and hate would decrease. And the world would know true peace. What are you waiting for? Give gratitude a try! You'll be happier you did.

AID & ATTENDANCE AND HOUSEBOUND

Veterans and survivors who are eligible for a VA pension and require the **aid and attendance** of another person, or are **housebound**, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. These benefits are paid in **addition** to monthly pension, and they are not paid without eligibility to Pension.

Since Aid and Attendance and Housebound allowances increase the pension amount, people who are not eligible for a basic pension due to excessive income may be eligible for pension at these increased rates. A Veteran or surviving spouse may not receive Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time.

Aid & Attendance (A&A)

The Aid & Attendance (A&A) increased monthly pension amount may be **added** to your monthly pension amount if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You require the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting yourself from the hazards of your daily environment.
- You are bedridden, in that your disability or disabilities requires that you remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment.
- You are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity.
- Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

Housebound

This increased monthly pension amount may be **added** to your monthly pension amount when you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of permanent disability.

How to Apply

You may apply for Aid & Attendance or Housebound benefits by submitting the prescribed VA forms to the Pension Management Center (PMC). Please call our office to schedule an appointment and we will assist you with that. You will need to include the following information:

- Evidence, like a doctor's report, that shows you need Aid & Attendance or Housebound care.
- The report should be in sufficient detail to determine whether there is disease or injury producing physical or mental impairment, loss of coordination, or conditions affecting the ability to dress and undress, to feed oneself, to attend to sanitary needs, and to keep oneself ordinarily clean and presentable.
- Whether the claim is for Aid and Attendance or Housebound, the report should indicate how well the applicant gets around, where the applicant goes, and what he or she is able to do during a typical day. In addition, it is necessary to determine whether the claimant is confined to the home or immediate premises.
- Details about what you normally do during the day and how you get places.

If you're in a nursing home, you'll also need to fill out a Request for Nursing Home Information in Connection with Claim for Aid and Attendance. We can help you complete and submit all the necessary paperwork.

Upcoming Event



Vet Center Veterans Day Open House



Wednesday, November 13, 2019
11:00 – 1:00 pm

Open House Will Include:

- Facility Tours
- Meet the Staff
- Information on Services
- Food & Refreshments

Green Bay Vet Center
1600 S. Ashland Ave
Green Bay, WI 54304

For more information:
(920) 435-5650



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



CONTACT US

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Veterans Service Office**

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Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.
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Visit us on the web at:

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veterans](http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans)



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For a list of more events,
check out our [calendar!](#)