

Avery Veterans Corner

✍ By Mike Halus Special to The AJT

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Burial Expenses Reimbursed

VA will pay burial allowances up to \$2,000 if the veteran's death is service-connected. In such cases, the person who bore the veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA.

In some cases, VA will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a veteran whose death was service-connected to the nearest National Cemetery with available gravesites. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims in service-connected cases.

Burial Allowance

VA will pay \$300 burial and funeral allowances for veterans who, at the time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled if they were not receiving military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a VA-contracted nursing home or State Veterans nursing home. In cases in which the veteran's death was not service-connected, claims must be filed within two years after burial or cremation.

Death Pension

VA provides pensions to low-income surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with wartime service. Eligibility depends upon spouse not remarrying and children must be under 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school, or have become permanently incapable of self-support because of disability before age 18. A surviving spouse may be entitled to a higher income limit if living in a nursing home, in need of the aid and attendance of another person or permanently housebound.

Veteran Health Registries

Certain veterans can participate in a VA health registry and receive free medical examinations, including laboratory and other diagnostic tests deemed necessary by an examining clinician. VA maintains health registries to provide special health examinations and health-related information. To participate, contact the Environmental Health (EH) Coordinator at a VAMC near you or call 1 (800) 827-1000 today.

Non-VA Health Care Services

VA may authorize veterans to receive care at a non-VA health care facility when the needed services are not available at a VAMC near the veteran, or if the veteran is unable to travel long distances to a VAMC. Non-VA care must be authorized by VA in advance. Veterans may also obtain services not covered in the benefits package through private health care.

For questions concerning veteran's benefits and to obtain needed forms call Georgia Henry, Avery County Veterans Service Office, at (828) 733-8211.

Comments and suggestions on the Veterans' Corner or Disabled American Veterans can be emailed to Mike Halus at averycountyveterans@gmail.com or call (828) 260-0620.