

Veterans Ready Life: Your Benefits & Transition Guide

Navigating life after service can be complex. This guide highlights essential actions to secure your VA benefits and ensure a smooth transition.

Contact John Biemesderfer, JFHQ Transition Assistant Specialist, about your Earned VA Benefits 629-332-6609, john.l.biemesderfer.civ@army.mil

VA Benefits & Eligibility

- Review and confirm your eligibility for all earned benefits, including healthcare, disability, education, and home loans.
- Document All Service: Confirm and document all active-duty time (Title 10, qualifying Title 32, deployments).
- Secure Key Documents: Orders, DD-214/ DD 214-1 (after 01 SEP 25), NGB 22 (before 01 SEP 25), pay records

Disability Claims

- Start your claim process early to maximize benefits.
- **AGR:** Pre-Separation Claims: Start the conversation about 8-9 months prior to separation/retirement. VA Claim can be submitted 180 days before separation/retirement.
- **M-DAY/Traditional Guard:** members can file a claim anytime an injury occurs performing military duties on drill, orders or annual training.
- Collect Evidence: Gather evidence of service-related injuries/illnesses, including drill pay records and Line of Duty (LOD) conditions.

Medical Records

- Ensure all military and civilian medical history is complete and accessible.
- Military Records Access: Your Medical Command assists with GENESIS, HAMIS, AHLTA, and hard copy records (PHAs, Pre/Post Deployment records).
- LOD Documentation: Verify that all LOD documentation is completed for injuries in a military status.

Healthcare & Mental Health

- VA Health Care is not automatic; you must apply for it.
- Apply for Coverage: Eligibility requires a VA disability rating or qualifying after a combat deployment.
- Access Mental Health: Access to VA mental health care is available even if you are not fully enrolled in the VA system.

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*Vet Center locations in Tennessee

Nashville
2501 McGavock Pk, Ste. 200
Nashville, TN 37214
(615) 883-2333

Clarksville
141 Chesapeake Ln, Ste. 101
Clarksville, TN 37043
(931) 221-4600

Johnson City
154 West Springbrook Dr.
Johnson City, TN 37604
(423) 928-8387

Memphis
2605 Nonconah Blvd, Ste. 160
Memphis, TN 38132
(901) 522-3950

Chattanooga
1300 Premier Dr, Ste. 180
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 855-6570

Knoxville
1645 Downtown W. Blvd, Ste. 28
Knoxville, TN 37919
(865) 633-0000

VA Education Benefits (GI Bill®)

- Use your earned benefits for school, training, and career development.
- Explore Programs: Review options like the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Ch. 33) or Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E, Ch. 31).
- Apply Online: Submit VA Form 22-1990 to get your Certificate of Eligibility (COE), then provide it to your school's VA Certifying Official.

Life Insurance (SGLI → VGLI)

- Secure continued life insurance for your family's financial security.
- Guaranteed Conversion: Convert Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) to Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) within 240 days of separation for guaranteed approval.
- Explore Options: Learn about other plans, such as VA Life Insurance (VA Life), with no medical requirements for enrollment if age 80 and under.

Document Storage

- Keep vital documents safe and organized for long-term access.
- Secure Storage: Store DD-214, DD 214-1, NGB-22, medical records, awards, training documents, and deployment orders in a secure location.
- Digital Backups: Create digital backups for long-term accessibility.

Burial & Cemetery Planning

- Plan ahead to ease the burden on your loved ones during difficult times.
- Apply Early: Submit a VA Pre-Need Burial Eligibility Application for a state or national cemetery.
- Inform Family: Share approval documents and DD-214/22 forms with family members.

Get Support

- You don't have to navigate this process alone.
- **Contact the TN Department of Veterans Services (TDVS) customer service helpline: (615) 741-2345** to request local assistance with an Accredited VA Advocate at no cost for claims, benefits, and state-specific programs.