



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-June 14, 2024

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is including three new cancer types in the list of presumed service-connected disabilities due to military environmental exposure under the PACT Act www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/. This announcement marks the continued commitment under the Biden-Harris administration's Unity Agenda and the Biden Cancer Moonshot to support the nation's Veterans.

Through a sub-regulatory policy letter published to the Federal Register www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/06/17/2024-13010/processing-claims-under-the-sergeant-first-class-heath-robinson-honoring-our-promise-to-address, the following three cancer types have been included in the list of presumptive diseases:

- Male breast cancer
- Urethral cancer
- Cancer of the paraurethral glands.

This policy establishes presumptions of service connection for eligible Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans who deployed to Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire Southwest Asia theater of operations <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/military-service.asp>, which includes Iraq. Presumptive service connection means VA automatically assumes service connection for the disease and provides benefits to eligible Veterans who have submitted claims with evidence of a diagnosis.

“We are working with urgency to deliver on the promise of the PACT Act to provide health care and benefits to as many toxic-exposed Veterans as possible — we’re leaning in wherever we can,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “VA is working with one goal in mind: getting today and tomorrow’s Veterans and their families the benefits they deserve as fast as possible.

Any Veteran who currently has or previously had one of the listed cancers at any time during military service or after separation may be entitled to disability compensation benefits dated back to Aug. 10, 2022, the date the PACT Act was signed into law. VA will review all claims from impacted Veterans and survivors who previously filed and were denied for these three conditions on or after Aug. 10, 2022, to determine if benefits can now be granted. Veterans enrolled in VA health care can obtain cancer screening and treatment at VA, which recently announced expansion of cancer care services (<https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-expands-close-to-me-cancer-program/>) closer to where Veterans are.

VA has granted its 1 millionth PACT Act-related disability compensation claim and awarded over \$5.7 billion to Veterans and survivors since President Biden signed the bill into law.

Veterans and survivors can apply or learn more about the PACT Act by visiting VA.gov/PACT or by calling 1-800-MYVA411.

There is no charge to file a claim with VA. For further assistance with the disability claims process, Veterans are encouraged to work with a VA-accredited representative or contact their state Veterans affairs office.

For more information about VA cancer care, visit cancer.va.gov.

NYS-Alternative Veterans Exemption: eligibility requirement

Benefits

- 15% reduction in assessed value to veterans who served during a time of war
- additional 10% reduction in assessed value to veterans serving in combat zones (includes recipients of expeditionary medals)
- additional reduction in assessed value to veterans who incur service-connected disabilities, equal to one– half of their service-connected disability ratings (regardless of whether such veterans served in combat zones)
- percentage-level benefits are subject to maximum dollar limits set by each taxing jurisdiction

Time of service requirements	
Designated time of war	
Persian Gulf conflict	(8/2/90 - present)
Vietnam War	(11/1/55 - 5/7/75)
Korean War	(6/27/50 - 1/31/55)
World War II	(12/7/41 - 12/31/46)

The following veterans also may qualify:

- Those who received an:
 - Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal,
 - Navy Expeditionary Medal,
 - Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, or
 - Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (not Service Medal).
- Those who served in U.S. Merchant Marines during World War II.
- Those who served during a civilian capacity during world War II in either of the following capacities:
 - American Field Service under U. S. Armies and the U.S. Army Groups
 - Flight crew and aviation ground support employee of Pan American Airlines' contract with the Air Transport Command

Character of Discharge

You must attach to your application either:

- Proof that you were discharged or released from service under honorable conditions; or
- A letter you received from the New York State Department of Veterans' Services stating that you now meet the character of discharge criteria for all of the benefits and services listed in the Restoration of Honor Act.

You must also provide proof of the times and places served in active duty, if not already included on the documentation described above.

Ownership Requirements

- legal title to residential property must be in the name of the veteran, spouse of a veteran, or the unmarried surviving spouse of a veteran
- the taxing jurisdiction may opt to allow the exemption in instances where title to residential property is in the name of a Gold Star Parent (defined as the parent of a child who died in the line of duty while serving in the U. S. Armed Forces during a time of war)
- legal title may also be in the name of a veteran, spouse of the veteran, unmarried spouse of a veteran or Gold Star Parent whenever such a person is a life tenant of the property; if title transfers to a trust, such a person becomes a trustee or beneficiary of such trust
- under certain circumstances, this exemption applies where title is in the name of the dependent parent of the veteran or his or her child who is under 21 years of age
- where property ownership is in the name of two or more qualified owners, the assessor combines the exemption benefits of each qualified owner on that parcel

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Residency Requirements

- exemption is only available for residential properties; if a portion of the property is in non-residential use, the exemption can't apply to this portion
- property eligible for this exemption must be the primary residence of the veteran, the unremarried surviving spouse of a veteran, or Gold Star Parent, unless that person is absent from the property for medical reasons or is in an institution
- if a veteran or other eligible owner moves to a new residence within a taxing jurisdiction that currently grants the exemption on the sold residence, and if the taxing jurisdiction allows a prorated exemption in its local laws, the exemption may transfer to the replacement residence; to continue to receive the exemption thereafter, the veteran must file a new form RP-458-a with the assessor on or before the next succeeding taxable status date
- if the qualifying veteran is deceased, the exemption may continue on the eligible property if the title to the property is in the name of the veteran's unremarried surviving spouse, and continues to use the property as the primary residence
- If the veteran is also the unremarried surviving spouse of a veteran, he or she may also receive any exemption benefit to which the deceased spouse was entitled
- If both husband and wife are deceased, the exemption can continue on the property if the veteran's dependent mother, father, child, or children under 21 have legally received the property and use it as their primary residence

Members of Reserves

A member of the reserve component of the Armed Forces who was discharged or released from active duty (beyond active duty for training), but is still a member of the reserves, is considered a veteran for purposes of this exemption, and is thus eligible to receive the exemption, provided that such active duty was significant and full-time (see [8 Op. Counsel SBEA No. 37](#)) and that the veteran meets all other statutory requirements. Otherwise, reservists are not eligible for an alternative veterans exemption.

Cold War Veterans Exemption—Eligibility Requirements

Benefits

- 10 or 15% reduction in assessed value (as adopted by the taxing jurisdiction)
- additional reduction for veterans who incur service-connected disabilities, equal to one-half of the service-connected disability rating Cold War period

NOTES: •Percentage-level benefits are subject to maximum dollar limits set by each taxing jurisdiction.

- The exemption is limited to 10 years in duration unless the taxing jurisdiction has acted to make it indefinite; the disability exemption benefit portion has no time limit.

Time of Service Requirements

September 2, 1945 through December 26, 1991

Character of Discharge

You must attach to your application either:

- Proof that you were discharged or released from service under honorable conditions; or
- A letter you received from the New York State Department of Veterans' Services stating that you now meet the character of discharge criteria for all of the benefits and services listed in the Restoration of Honor Act.

You must also provide proof of the times and places served in active duty, if not already included on the documentation described above.

Ownership Requirements

- legal title to residential property must be in the name of the veteran, spouse of a veteran, or the unremarried surviving spouse of a veteran
- if the property is owned by more than one qualified owner, the exemption benefits of each qualified owner may be combined
- legal title may also be in the name of a veteran, spouse of the veteran, or unremarried surviving spouse of a veteran whenever such a person is a life tenant of the property; if title transfers to a trust, such a person becomes a trustee or beneficiary of such trust

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Residency Requirements

- exemption applies only on property used exclusively for residential purposes; if a portion of the property is in non-residential use, the exemption can't apply to this portion
- property eligible for this exemption must be the primary residence of the veteran or the unremarried surviving spouse of the a Cold War veteran, unless that person is absent from the property for medical reasons or is in an institution
- if the qualifying veteran is deceased, the exemption may continue on the eligible property if the title to the property is in the name of the veteran's unremarried surviving spouse, and continues to use the property as the primary residence
- if the veteran is also the unremarried surviving spouse of a veteran, he or she may also receive any exemption benefit to which the deceased spouse was entitled municipalities have the option to offer the exemption for eligible veterans in co operative apartments

Members of Reserves

A member of the reserve component of the Armed Forces who was discharged or released from active duty during the Cold War period (beyond active duty for training), but is still a member of the reserves, is considered a veteran for purposes of this exemption, and is thus eligible to receive the exemption, provided that such active duty was significant and full-time (see 8 Op. Counsel SBEA No. 37) and that the veteran meets all other statutory requirements. Otherwise, reservists are not eligible for a Cold War veterans exemption.

Obtaining a veterans exemption is not automatic – If you're an eligible veteran, you must submit the initial exemption application form to your assessor. The deadline in most communities is March 1, please confirm the date with your assessor.

A Message from our County Executive

There is so much good going on now in Rensselaer County, with services being improved, investments being made, and jobs created. More and more are seeking to work here or call our county home. With all that positive news, it is helpful and necessary to remember where that progress started and where our freedom comes from.

Memorial Day is both an opportunity and an obligation. We have the chance to see and thank our veterans during one of the dozen or so parades across our great county. Veterans show they are still serving and even protecting our county, just as they did for our country.

We also have more than a passing thought to those who left home in defense of our nation and our freedom but did not return. Young soldiers, sailors and airmen who stood strong against tyranny and terror and who made the ultimate sacrifice. They never enjoyed or received the full measure of freedom they earned, but hopefully, they are foremost in our thoughts and prayers. Rensselaer County will never forget.

Steven F. McLaughlin

Upcoming Events:



Call us by the 15th of the month and we will list your event .

July 8th...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony-County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 am:

Francis A. Piche, US Navy-S1c-WWII

July 27th...Upstate New York Wounded Vet Run (Rain or Shine), registration starts at 9am at Brunswick Harley, 1130 Hoosick Rd., Troy and ends at Veterans of Lansingburgh, 777 1st Ave., North Troy, NY. More info: upstatenywvr@gmail.com

August 4th...Honoring Our Vets Car Show at Butler Park, Rte 43, Averill Park, NY from 10am-2pm. More info:comfortzone@gmail.com

August 12th...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony-County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 am: TBD

August 28th-September 2nd...Schaghticoke Fair, come see us at our table in the Rensselaer County Building