

The ELDERCARE TEAM

Your Guide Through The Eldercare Maze



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VA Benefits After 50 Years

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From the Mailbag: Mom is in hospital and in the foreseeable future will go to rehab. The decision must ultimately be made as to whether other arrangements can be made or will we need to look into long term care facility. The question is, would she be eligible for any type of benefits from my father's military service even after this length of time has passed (50 years)? If she indeed is eligible for benefits, would the only surviving child then receive those benefits or are those strictly for the surviving spouse?

Answer: What you are asking about is the VA "Enhanced Pension," also known as the "Aid and Attendance Benefit." This benefit is available to US military veterans who served for at least 3 months during a time of war, and to their spouses if their has been no re-marriage. The length of time since this war service is not relative if the veteran or spouse is over the age of 65 or disabled.

The aid and attendance benefit is for veterans or their spouses with limited resources (somewhere between \$50,000 and \$80,000, depending on the veteran's age) who do need "aid" (assistance) or "attendance" (supervision) at home - assisted living also qualifies as home - and who do not have sufficient resources to pay for this care.

Under certain circumstances the benefit retroactively reimburses a veteran or veteran's spouse for the costs of qualifying care already purchased out of his or her monthly income, as well as medications and medical equipment. So long as the veteran has a formal contract for the care the VA doesn't much care who is providing it. The provider can be an agency, an assisted living facility, a privately hired caregiver, a relative or a friend.

Benefits for care in a nursing home are very limited, however.

In order to apply for this benefit the veteran must have a copy of his or her military discharge, the DD 214 document. If this document has been lost a veteran, spouse or family member can procure a replacement DD214. This can take some time, so if you have any thought of applying for this benefit and need a replacement DD-214, start now. Here's more information on [how to get a replacement DD-214](#) .

Because the Aid and Attendance benefit simply reimburses a veteran or a veteran's spouse for care already purchased in order to bring the monthly income back up to a defined minimum, it is not transferrable.

In the case of your mother, when she stops paying for aid and attendance services, according to the VA her need for the benefit would also stop.

This is a quick overview of a complex VA benefit. The application process is lengthy and very specific. Physician statements detailing the need for care and other documents are required. While we are not experts on the VA Aid and Attendance benefit, the people at [VeteranAid](#) are. If you don't see the information you need here, pay them a visit. When it comes to Aid and Attendance, they know what they are doing.

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