

# Did You Know?

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That last month's article about rumors that circulate regarding VA benefits was a great hit. I received numerous calls and e-mails from fellow legionnaires, many of which thought the rumors mentioned were true. They were glad to find out otherwise and in some cases we have filed claims on their behalf. Still others contacted me to ask about other rumors they had heard and wanted me to check them out. So I have compiled four more common misconceptions/rumors about your Veterans Benefits and the real answers.

**1. I've been out of the service over ten years and can't use my education benefits to go to school.** This is partially true. Veterans are usually only given ten years from the date they were released from active duty to use the education G.I. Bill. However there are several major exceptions. First, a veteran who files a claim for service-related compensation and receives a rating (usually 20% or more) has fourteen years from the date they received their award letter to apply for educational benefits under the Vocational Rehabilitation program. For example, a Vietnam vet discharged in 1972 first files for compensation in 2003. He or she is granted 30% for Agent Orange related diabetes. They now have 14 yrs. from 2003 to see if they qualify for that program. Another way to get education benefits is under our state program called the "Illinois Veterans Grant". Any honorably discharged vet who entered service from Illinois and returned to our state after discharge can have their tuition and most fees waived if they go to one of our state schools or universities. And there is NO TIME LIMIT. A Korean vet, for example, who meets the above criteria, gets downsized at his company. They can go back to school under the IVG!

**2. Only veteran can be buried in a National Cemetery.** Wrong. The deceased spouses and eligible dependent children can also be buried there. And it doesn't even have to be in the same cemetery. Example. Mr. Joe Q. Veteran's wife dies in 2001. He has her buried in Abe Lincoln National Cemetery. Ten years later he relocates to Florida and dies there. He can be buried in that state. And there is no limit to the number of spouses that can be buried. The record we are aware of is a veteran who lives in the Danville area. He is on his fourth marriage and his first three wives are interred in the VA cemetery down there.

**3. A person who served in the National Guard for eight years, went to weekend drills and summer camp and was then discharged isn't entitled to any VA benefits.**

This is also partially true. Most soldiers in this category would only be eligible for some education benefits under the selective reserve programs. However some could get quite a bit more. Remember the Martin Luther King riots in 1969 and the Post Office strike? If a soldier is "Federally" activated by the President this normally makes them a veteran and they can use the VA hospital and other services. Or if this same soldier goes to their summer camp for two weeks and during that time is hurt on a field exercise they can apply for and get service-related compensation from the VA. This in turn opens up additional education benefits and life insurance. We have even had cases where a soldier is hurt on their weekend drill meeting and becomes eligible!

**4. I've waited too long and now can't get dental care from the VA.** Again, partially true. While most veterans only have 180 days from discharge to use the VA for dental care there are many exceptions. For instance all former P.O.W.'s have life time dental. Also those veterans rated 100% service-connected disabled (including those with less than 100% but qualify for individual unemployability) can see the VA dentist. And those veterans training under the Vocational Rehabilitation program can get dental care. Finally if a VA doctor recommends it so as to not make an existing service-related condition worse. For instance a veteran has ulcers and if he doesn't chew his food properly his ulcers will get worse. Or the medication prescribed to treat the ulcers causes the veterans' teeth to deteriorate. You get the picture.

Hope you enjoyed these and I will continue to look out for more from the "Rumor Mills". Keep your calls and e-mails coming with your rumor and I'll check it out. In the meantime, as always, your VA&R staff is ready to assist you. Just contact me at the above telephone number or e-mail address.