

Did You Know?

(By: Raymond P. Toczek Legion Service Officer)

312-980-4264

Raymond.Toczek@va.gov

That we can go months at a time and sometimes even a whole year without any new changes to our Veterans Administration benefits. Then suddenly we get a spurt of changes and/or new laws. Recently there have been three which I want to advise you on and ask your help in particular with the last one.

BRONZE MEDALLION

Most of us know by now that when we pass away we are entitled to a free government headstone. Many veterans, for various reasons, are interred in a private cemetery. It could be for religious reasons, to be close to a deceased spouse or family plot or for the shorter distance to visit the grave. Often times a headstone is purchased privately and there is no indication on those stones that a veteran occupies the grave. Until recently the Veterans Administration would furnish a Bronze Medallion to mark the grave BUT the veteran's death had to be after October 31, 1990. That law was changed and now any veteran who died since World War I can get this Medallion which can be placed on the private headstone. All branches of service are recognized and the sizes range from 2" x 1 1/2" to 6 3/8" x 4 3/4". The proper form to request this is 40-1330M and can be obtained by calling the National Call Center (1-800-827-1000) of the Veterans Administration. And by the way, this change was a direct result of one of our resolutions that was submitted by a Post in the 1st Division. It was passed at our State Convention and went on to our National Convention where it was also passed and became part of our legislative agenda!

PRE-NEED DETERMINATION FOR BURIAL IN A NATIONAL CEMETERY

Prior to this change, a veteran's family had to wait until the veteran passed away to determine eligibility for burial. Often times discharge papers were missing or misplaced and veterans ended up being buried in a private cemetery. Now a veteran can apply for eligibility ahead of time. After the proper form is processed the Veterans Administration cemetery system will keep a permanent record of eligibility. Upon a veterans death the Funeral Director need only call the Veterans Administration cemetery and furnish the Social Security number. You can also apply for pre-approval for your spouse. Once I heard of this law change I applied for both myself and my spouse. We are now on file! And remember, even if pre-approved you or your family can always change their mind and be buried privately. The correct form number is 40-10007 and can also be obtained at the above telephone number.

CAMP LEJEUNE DISABILITY PRESUMPTIVES

The regulations are now in place. If you served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum (cumulative) of 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1986 you may now qualify for possible Veterans Administration service-connected compensation. This includes Reserve and National Guard members. The following conditions have been approved:

adult leukemia	Parkinson's disease	kidney cancer
aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes		
bladder cancer	non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	
liver cancer	multiple myeloma	

This last one we can use your help. If you know of a veteran who meets the above requirements but died and left a widow or widower, that surviving spouse may qualify. Please have them contact our office as-soon-as-possible!

You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.
Winston Churchill