§ 3.342 Permanent and total disability ratings for pension purposes.

(a) General. Permanent total disability ratings for pension purposes are authorized for disabling conditions not the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct whether or not they are service connected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a))

(b) Criteria. In addition to the criteria for determining total disability and permanency of total disability contained in §3.340, the following special considerations apply in pension cases:

(1) Permanent total disability pension ratings will be authorized for congenital, developmental, hereditary or familial conditions, provided the other requirements for entitlement are met.

(2) The permanence of total disability will be established as of the earliest date consistent with the evidence in the case. Active pulmonary tuberculosis not otherwise established as permanently and totally disabling will be presumed so after 6 months’ hospitalization without improvement. The same principle may be applied with other types of disabilities requiring hospitalization for indefinite periods. The need for hospitalization for periods shorter or longer than 6 months may be a proper basis for determining permanence. Where, in application of this principle, it is necessary to employ a waiting period to determine permanence of totality of disability and a report received at the end of such period shows the veteran’s condition is unimproved, permanence may be established as of the date of entrance into the hospital. In other cases the rating will be effective the date the evidence establishes permanence.

(3) Special consideration must be given the question of permanence in the case of veterans under 40 years of age. For such veterans, permanence of total disability requires a finding that the end result of treatment and adjustment to residual handicaps (rehabilitation) will be permanent disability of the required degree precluding more than marginal employment. Severe diseases and injuries, including multiple fractures or the amputation of a single extremity, should not be taken to establish permanent and total disability until it is shown that the veteran after treatment and convalescence, has been unable to secure or follow employment because of the disability and through no fault of the veteran.

(4) The following shall not be considered as evidence of employability:
§ 3.343 Continuance of total disability ratings.

(a) General. Total disability ratings, when warranted by the severity of the condition and not granted purely because of hospital, surgical, or home treatment, or individual unemployability will not be reduced, in the absence of clear error, without examination showing material improvement in physical or mental condition. Examination reports showing material improvement must be evaluated in conjunction with all the facts of record, and consideration must be given particularly to whether the veteran attained improvement under the ordinary conditions of life, i.e., while working or actively seeking work or whether the symptoms have been brought under control by prolonged rest, or generally, by following a regimen which precludes work, and, if the latter, reduction from total disability ratings will not be considered pending reexamination after a period of employment (3 to 6 months).

(b) Tuberculosis; compensation. In service-connected cases, evaluations for active or inactive tuberculosis will be governed by the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (part 4 of this chapter). Where in the opinion of the rating board the veteran at the expiration of the period during which a total rating is provided will not be able to maintain inactivity of the disease process under the ordinary conditions of life, the case will be submitted under §3.321.

(c) Individual unemployability. (1) In reducing a rating of 100 percent service-connected disability based on individual unemployability, the provisions of §3.105(e) are for application but caution must be exercised in such a determination that actual employability is established by clear and convincing evidence. When in such a case the veteran is undergoing vocational rehabilitation, education or training, the rating will not be reduced by reason thereof unless there is received evidence of marked improvement or recovery in physical or mental conditions or of employment progress, income earned, and prospects of economic rehabilitation, which demonstrates affirmatively the veteran’s capacity to pursue the vocation or occupation for which the training is intended to qualify him or her,