

Department of Veterans Affairs

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subsequently involved in the application of this section.

[41 FR 18300, May 3, 1976, as amended at 59 FR 32659, June 24, 1994]

§ 3.54 Marriage dates.

A surviving spouse may qualify for pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation if the marriage to the veteran occurred before or during his or her service or, if married to him or her after his or her separation from service, before the applicable date stated in his section.

(a) *Pension*. Death pension may be paid to a surviving spouse who was married to the veteran:

(1) One year or more prior to the veteran's death, or

(2) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage, or

(3) Prior to the applicable delimiting dates, as follows:

(i) Civil War—June 27, 1905.

(ii) Indian wars—March 4, 1917.

(iii) Spanish-American War—January 1, 1938.

(iv) Mexican border period and World War I—December 14, 1944.

(v) World War II—January 1, 1957.

(vi) Korean conflict—February 1, 1965.

(vii) Vietnam era—May 8, 1985.

(viii) Persian Gulf War—January 1, 2001.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 532(d), 534(c), 536(c), 541(e), 541(f))

(b) *Compensation*. Death compensation may be paid to a surviving spouse who, with respect to date of marriage, could have qualified as a surviving spouse for death compensation under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs in effect on December 31, 1957, or who was married to the veteran:

(1) Before the expiration of 15 years after termination of the period of service in which the injury or disease which caused the veteran's death was incurred or aggravated, or

(2) One year or more, or

(3) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1102)

(c) *Dependency and indemnity compensation*. Dependency and indemnity compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1310(a) may be paid to the surviving spouse of a veteran who died on or after January 1, 1957, who was married to the veteran:

(1) Before the expiration of 15 years after the termination of the period of service in which the injury or disease causing the death of the veteran was incurred or aggravated, or

(2) For 1 year or more, or

(3) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1304)

(d) *Child born*. The term *child born of the marriage* means a birth on or after the date of the marriage on which the surviving spouse's entitlement is predicated. The term *born to them before the marriage* means a birth prior to the date of such marriage. Either term includes a fetus advanced to the point of gestation required to constitute a birth under the law of the jurisdiction in which the fetus was delivered.

(e) *More than one marriage to veteran*. For periods commencing on or after January 1, 1958, where a surviving spouse has been married legally to a veteran more than once, the date of the original marriage will be used in determining whether the statutory requirement as to date of marriage has been met.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(b))

[26 FR 1567, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 6498, July 10, 1962; 32 FR 13224, Sept. 19, 1967; 40 FR 16064, Apr. 9, 1975; 40 FR 48680, Oct. 17, 1975; 41 FR 18300, May 3, 1976; 44 FR 22718, Apr. 17, 1979; 54 FR 31829, Aug. 2, 1989; 56 FR 5756, Feb. 13, 1991; 56 FR 57986, Nov. 15, 1991; 65 FR 3392, Jan. 21, 2000]

§ 3.55 Reinstatement of benefits eligibility based upon terminated marital relationships.

(a) *Surviving spouse*. (1) Remarriage of a surviving spouse shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse if the marriage:

(i) Was void, or

(ii) Has been annulled by a court having basic authority to render annulment decrees, unless it is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs

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that the annulment was obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(2) On or after January 1, 1971, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated prior to November 1, 1990, or terminated by legal proceedings commenced prior to November 1, 1990, by an individual who, but for the remarriage, would be considered the surviving spouse, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse provided that the marriage:

- (i) Has been terminated by death, or
- (ii) Has been dissolved by a court with basic authority to render divorce decrees unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the divorce was secured through fraud by the surviving spouse or by collusion.

(3) On or after October 1, 1998, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated by death, divorce, or annulment, will not bar the furnishing of dependency and indemnity compensation, unless the Secretary determines that the divorce or annulment was secured through fraud or collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(4) On or after December 1, 1999, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated by death, divorce, or annulment, will not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, unless the Secretary determines that the divorce or annulment was secured through fraud or collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d))

(5) On or after January 1, 1971, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to him or her after he or she terminates the relationship, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990.

(6) On or after October 1, 1998, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of dependency

and indemnity compensation to the surviving spouse if he or she ceases living with such other person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as such other person's spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(7) On or after December 1, 1999, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 to the surviving spouse if he or she ceases living with such other person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as such other person's spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d))

(8) On or after January 1, 1971, the fact that benefits to a surviving spouse may previously have been barred because his or her conduct or a relationship into which he or she had entered had raised an inference or presumption that he or she had remarried or had been determined to be open and notorious adulterous cohabitation, or similar conduct, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse after he or she terminates the conduct or relationship, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990.

(9) *Benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1781 for a surviving spouse who remarries after age 55.* (i) On or after February 4, 2003, the remarriage of a surviving spouse after age 55 shall not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, subject to the limitation in paragraph (a)(9)(ii) of this section.

(ii) A surviving spouse who remarried after the age of 55, but before December 6, 2002, may be eligible for benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781 pursuant to paragraph (a)(9)(i) only if the application for such benefits was received by VA before December 16, 2004.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103).

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(10) *Benefits for a surviving spouse who remarries after age 57.* (i) On or after January 1, 2004, the remarriage of a surviving spouse after the age of 57 shall not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311, medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, subject to the limitation in paragraph (a)(10)(ii) of this section.

(ii) A surviving spouse who remarried after the age of 57, but before December 16, 2003, may be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311, medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 pursuant to paragraph (a)(10)(i) only if the application for such benefits was received by VA before December 16, 2004.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103).

(b) *Child.* (1) Marriage of a child shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to or on account of such child, if the marriage:

(i) Was void, or

(ii) Has been annulled by a court having basic authority to render annulment decrees, unless it is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the annulment was obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(2) On or after January 1, 1975, marriage of a child terminated prior to November 1, 1990, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to or for such child provided that the marriage:

(i) Has been terminated by death, or

(ii) Has been dissolved by a court with basic authority to render divorce decrees unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the divorce was secured through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103; 105 Stat. 424, 106 Stat. 4322)

CROSS REFERENCES: Evidence. See §§ 3.206 and 3.207. Termination of marital relationship or conduct. See § 3.215.

[58 FR 32444, June 10, 1993, as amended at 60 FR 52863, Oct. 11, 1995; 64 FR 30245, June 7, 1999; 65 FR 43700, July 14, 2000; 71 FR 29084, May 19, 2006]

§ 3.56 [Reserved]

§ 3.57 Child.

(a) *General.* (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (a)(2) and (3) of this section, the term *child* of the veteran means an unmarried person who is a legitimate child, a child legally adopted before the age of 18 years, a stepchild who acquired that status before the age of 18 years and who is a member of the veteran's household or was a member of the veteran's household at the time of the veteran's death, or an illegitimate child; and

(i) Who is under the age of 18 years; or

(ii) Who, before reaching the age of 18 years, became permanently incapable of self-support; or

(iii) Who, after reaching the age of 18 years and until completion of education or training (but not after reaching the age of 23 years) is pursuing a course of instruction at an educational institution approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs. For the purposes of this section and § 3.667, the term "educational institution" means a permanent organization that offers courses of instruction to a group of students who meet its enrollment criteria, including schools, colleges, academies, seminaries, technical institutes, and universities. The term also includes home schools that operate in compliance with the compulsory attendance laws of the States in which they are located, whether treated as private schools or home schools under State law. The term "home schools" is limited to courses of instruction for grades kindergarten through 12.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A), 104(a))

(2) For the purposes of determining entitlement of benefits based on a child's school attendance, the term *child* of the veteran also includes the following unmarried persons: