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***If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?***

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# Alabama State Veteran's Benefits

The state of Alabama provides several veteran benefits. This section offers a brief description of each of the following benefits.

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## Alabama Veteran Housing Programs

### Alabama State Veterans Home Program

The State of Alabama is extending this special kind of care to veterans through a partnership with the federal government and private industry. The Bill Nichols State Veterans Home in Alexander City has been "home" to hundreds of veterans since its opening in 1989. In January 1995, Alabama opened two more homes to veterans, the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home in Huntsville, and the William F. Green State Veterans Home in Bay Minette. In 2012 the Col. Robert L Howard State Veterans Home opened in Pell City.

## Alabama Financial Assistance Programs

### Ad Valorem Tax Exemptions

#### Homes of Totally Disabled Persons or Those Over Age 65:

Exemption is provided from ad valorem taxation of the home of any person who is totally disabled or who is 65 years of age or older, and who had a net annual income of \$12,000.00 or less for income tax purposes for the last preceding year.

#### Homes of Veterans/Widows Acquired Under Public Law 702:

The home of any veteran which is or was acquired by him under the specially adapted housing grant regardless of its value is tax exempt as long as it is owned and occupied as a home by the veteran or his un-remarried widow.

#### Motor Vehicle Paid for by VA Grant:

Any disabled veteran of WW II or of any hostilities in which the United States was, is or shall be engaged against any foreign state who owns an automobile which has been, is or shall hereafter be all or partly paid for with funds furnished for such purposes by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), under the authority of any act of the Congress of the United States is entitled to exemptions from all license fees and ad valorem taxes on such motor vehicle provided the veteran keeps the vehicle only for private use.

#### Veterans Organizations:

All property owned by the American Legion or by Veterans of Foreign Wars or by the Disabled American Veterans, or any post thereof; provided, that such property is used and occupied exclusively by their organization.

### Exemption of Debts Incurred Pursuant to National Housing Act or Veterans' Benefits

All debts or extensions of credit incurred pursuant to any provision of the act of Congress known as the National Housing Act, as the same now exists or may hereafter be amended or supplemented, and all debts or extensions of credit incurred pursuant to any act of Congress relating to veterans' benefits, as the same now exists or may hereafter be amended or supplemented, are exempt from any law of this state relating to usury or prescribing or limiting interest rates.

### Military Retiree Income Tax Exemption

Effective January 1, 1989, and for all successive tax years, all retirement or compensation received as retirement benefits by any person retired from the military service of the United States of America and survivor benefits derived therefrom is hereby exempt from any state, county or municipal income tax or like tax whatever name called.

### **Unemployment Compensation**

A person who served in the armed forces of the United States and who is unemployed may be entitled to unemployment compensation based on their honorable military or naval service. Contact the nearest State Employment Compensation Claims Office. Pension or disability payments provided by the United States to the individuals who have completed the period of military service may disqualify such individual from receiving unemployment compensation.

### **Military Combat Pay Income Tax Exemption**

Money paid by the United States to a person as compensation for active service as a member of the armed forces of the United States in a combat zone designed by executive order of the President of the United States shall not be subject to income taxes levied by the State of Alabama for the calendar year 1965 or any subsequent year.

## **Alabama Veteran Employment Programs**

### **Job Status and Reemployment Rights**

County and municipal officials who enter the military or naval service at a time when a state of national emergency has been declared to exist by the President of the United States, have preservation of job status and reemployment rights. Any teacher entering the military service of the United States, who is not on continuing service status but who has accumulated one or more years of teaching experience immediately prior to entering military service, shall be given credit for such experience if such teacher is re-imposed within one year after release from military service.

### **Preference in State Classified Employment**

All persons who have been honorably discharged from the United States armed forces at any time shall have five points added to any earned ratings in examination for entrance to the state classified service. Those honorably discharged veterans with the present existence of a service-connected disability and entitled to pension, compensation or disability allowance under existing laws shall have 10 points added to any earned ratings. Wives and widows of certain disabled or deceased veterans may have the 10 point preference extended to them and added to any earned ratings.

### **Membership in State Employees'/Teachers' Retirement System**

Retirement benefits rights of state employees and teachers who enter the armed forces and return to state employment after discharge are preserved. A member who enter the armed services and does not withdraw contributions, and who returns to said employment within one year after being honorably discharged, may be granted credit for military service up to four years, provided the employee pays an amount equal to four percent of the average compensation paid to a state employee during each claimed year of full-time military service, plus and together there with eight percent interest compounded from the last date of such claimed military service. The contributions must be made within a period of time equal to the length of service in the armed forces or before attainment of age 60, or in the case of a state policeman, age 56, whichever occurs first. No credit for military service shall be granted if such member is receiving military service retirement benefits.

## **Alabama Veterans Business Benefits**

### **Business and Occupation License Exemptions for Disabled Veterans**

Any bona fide permanent resident of Alabama who is a veteran WW II or at any time past, present or future, when the United States was, is or shall be engaged in hostilities with any foreign state and who has physical disabilities of 25% or more whether service-connected or not, who conducts their business as a means of livelihood through their personal efforts and has no more than one employee and whose property (both real and personal) is valued at less than \$5,000.00 and net income is less than \$2,500.00 is entitled to businesses and occupations license exemptions of \$25.00 for each state, county and municipality. There is not a deadline on these exemptions.

### **Forfeiture of Franchise**

No corporate franchise shall be forfeited for non-use, if any of the managing officers of such corporation become engaged in military service of the United States and as a result thereof the corporation suspends operations, if the corporation has paid all its franchise and other taxes to the State.

# Alabama Education Assistance Programs

## G. I. Dependents' Scholarship Program

This program is administered by the ADVA and is governed by ALA. CODE §§ 31-6-1, et seq. The veteran must meet the following qualifications to establish eligibility of his/her dependents:

Military Service: The veteran must have honorably served at least 90 days of continuous active federal military service or honorably discharged by reason of service-connected disability after serving less than 90 days of continuous active federal military service.

Disability Requirements: The veteran must be rated 20% or more by the USDVA due to service-connected disabilities or have held the qualifying rating at the time of death, a former prisoner of war (POW), or declared missing in action (MIA), or died as the result of a service-connected disability, or died while on active military service in the line of duty.

Residency Requirements: The veteran must have been a permanent civilian resident of the State of Alabama for at least one year immediately prior to (a) the initial entry into active military service or (b) any subsequent period of military service in which a break (1 year or more) in service occurred and the Alabama civilian residency was established. Permanently service-connected veterans rated at 100% who did not enter service from Alabama, may qualify after establishing at least five years of permanent residency in Alabama prior to filing of an application or immediately prior to death, if deceased.

Entitlement: Dependent children are awarded five standard academic years or part-time equivalent at any Alabama state-supported institution of higher learning or a prescribed course of study at any Alabama state-supported technical school without payment of any tuition, required textbooks or instructional fees for eligible dependents initially enrolling in school on or after Fall 2009. Children who enrolled in school prior to Fall 2009 receive four academic years of scholarship benefits.

A spouse or widow(er) of a veteran who is rated 20% - 90% by the USDVA due to service connected disabilities, and who initially enrolls in school on or after Fall 2009, are entitled to three standard academic years without payment of tuition, required textbooks and instructional fees or a prescribed technical course not to exceed 27 months of training. A spouse enrolled in school before Fall 2009 receive two academic years of scholarship benefits. Note: Widow(er) forfeits benefits upon remarriage. Spouse forfeits benefits upon divorce from veteran in which the spouse derived eligibility.

Beginning in Fall 2014, students enrolled for the first time in the program are limited to undergraduate level classes at in-state tuition rates. Students admitted to the program before August 1, 2014 will retain the benefits as previously awarded. Age Deadline: The child or stepchild must initiate training prior to their 26th birthday. Age 30 deadlines may apply in certain situations. There is no age deadline for submission of the application by the spouse or un-remarried widow(er). This deadline may be extended for previously denied applications who were denied solely on the veteran's peacetime status. In order to receive this extension, applications must be resubmitted and received at ADVA Headquarters no later than August 1, 2015

Application Assistance – Applications may be obtained at any Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs Office. Please contact the ADVA Veterans Service Office nearest you.

Out-of-state applicants may receive additional information by contacting:

Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs  
Alabama G. I. Dependents Scholarship Program  
P.O. Box 1509  
Montgomery, AL 36102-1509  
Phone: (334) 242-5077

## **Other Alabama State Veteran Benefits**

### **Armed Forces Voter Registration and Absentee Voting**

Members of the armed forces of the United States and their dependents may register and receive an absentee ballot for voting in the county of their Alabama permanent address by completing the federal postcard application form, "Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request" (Standard Form 76). This form may be obtained from the military unit's voting officer. The completed form should be mailed to the Board of Registrars in the county of his/her Alabama permanent address.

### **Commitment of Incompetent Veteran**

Whenever it appears that an incompetent veteran of any war, military occupation or expedition is eligible for treatment in a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center is necessary for the proper care and treatment of such veteran, the courts of this state are hereby authorized to communicate with the administration with reference to available facilities and eligibility and, upon receipt of a certificate from the administration stating that there are facilities available in a VA Medical Center is entitled to hospitalization therein, the court may then direct such veteran's commitment to such hospital. Notice of such pending proceedings shall be furnished the person so committed, and his right to appear and defend shall not be denied.

### **Executive, Attestation and Acknowledgment Certification**

Acknowledgments, proof of conveyance and affidavits may be taken by certain government, state or municipal officials or by any commissioned officer of any of the armed forces of the United States, within or outside the limits of the United States, and when such acknowledgment is taken by the latter, no seal of office is required and the signature of such commissioned officer is prima facie proof of his authority, and is retroactive as of December 7, 1941.

### **Fiduciaries in War Service**

Any fiduciary engaged in war service may be removed from this office as such upon petition filed in the proper court having jurisdiction and again serve as such fiduciary at any time after the termination of their war service upon petition of the court.

### **Fishing License**

Any person who is totally disabled and who has been a bona fide resident of this state for not less than six months preceding the date of application may, upon the payment of a license fee of \$1.00, procure a special annual fishing license. There is also a discounted freshwater license available for 20% or greater disabled Veterans.

### **Guardianship for Veterans and Minor Dependents**

The Uniform Veterans' Guardianship Act provides for the appointment of a guardian for veterans and their minor dependents who are mentally or physically incapacitated. This Act outlines the appointment process, duties, responsibilities, limits, taxing of costs and fees of guardianship. The control and accountability of the beneficiary's estate and income include only moneys received by the guardian from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and all earnings, interest and profits derived.

### **Hunting License**

No exemption is available for hunting license due to disability.

### **Military Leave of Absence**

All officers and employees of the State of Alabama, or of any county, municipality, or other agency or political subdivision thereof, who shall be active members of the Alabama National Guard or naval militia, or of the Officers' Reserve Corps of the United States Army, or of the reserve components of the United States armed forces, shall be entitled to military or naval leave of absence from their respective civil duties and occupations on all days that they shall be engaged in field or coast defense or other training or on other service ordered under the provision of the below cited statute, or of the National Defense Act, or of the federal laws governing the United States reserves, without loss of pay, time, efficiency rating, annual vacation, or sick leave, but no such person granted such leave of absence with pay shall be paid for more than 21 working days at any one time.

**Notice of Armed Forces Death**

A written notice or communication from the Department of Defense, the Adjutant General of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy or other officer charged with the duty of sending such notice or communication to the effect that any person in the armed forces of our country, or serving as auxiliary thereto, is dead shall be accepted as evidence of the death of such person.

**Official Report of Person Missing, Etc**

An official written report or record or duly certified copy thereof, that a person is missing, missing in action, interned in a neutral country, or beleaguered, besieged or captured by an enemy or is dead or is alive, made by any officer or employee of the United States authorized by any law of the United States to make same, shall be received in any court, office or other place in this State as evidence as to the status of the person.

**Peace Officers' Credit for Military Service**

Any peace officer who becomes a member of the fund and who left employment and entered directly into the armed forces of the United States and who returned to work as a peace officer within six months after release or discharge shall receive prior employment service credit for service in the military not to exceed five years.

**Public Records**

One copy of any public record (birth or marriage certificate, divorce decree, etc.) is furnished free of charge when required by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to be used in determining the eligibility of any person to participate in benefits made available by their federal agency.

**Recording of Discharges**

Honorable discharges and certificates of honorable service are recorded free of charge by probate judges.

**Validation of Marriage of Divorced Persons**

Marriages of all persons subsequent to a divorce decree granted in the State and not prohibiting the person from remarrying, are declared to be valid, notwithstanding that the decree of divorce did not specifically confer on such person the right to remarry. Many claims for pension and compensation against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have been made effective by this law.

**Wills**

The will of a person, executed while in the armed forces, is admitted to probate when subscribing witness or witnesses are out of the state at the time the will is offered for probate; or when places of address of witnesses are unknown, upon oath of at least three persons that the signature to said will is in the handwriting of the person whose will it intends to be. Such will is acceptable when so proved.

Visit the [Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs website](#) for more information on any of these programs.