



The Government's Best Kept Secret

By Wilma G. Anderson, RFC

If you ask an elderly Veteran about how to qualify for an additional pension from the VA to help pay for their long term care costs, the Vet will probably tell you "*I'm not eligible because I wasn't injured in the War*". This is a common misconception which keeps many Vets from tapping into a benefit that they deserve.

Vets who are 65+, or who are disabled, plus their Spouses (and/or their Widows) can qualify for large sums of money to help pay for long term care costs, if they know how to qualify for and apply for the benefit. There are several Veteran pensions, but the pension designed to help elderly Veterans and their Spouses or widows pay for costly home care, Assisted Living expenses, and/or nursing home costs is called the **Special Monthly Pension with Aid and Attendance**.

The Special Aid and Attendance Benefit is the U.S. Government's best kept secret. I cannot tell you how many Veterans have told me that they called the Veteran Affairs office and were told that this pension does not exist, or that they did not qualify. The pension really does exist, but learning how to qualify for this benefit takes careful planning.

To qualify for this pension, Veterans must be disabled, or age 65+, and served in the military during wartime. For World War II and Korean veterans they must have had 90 days of active service, with at least 1 of those days served during a declared time of war. Six (6) months of active duty is required for a Vet who served during the Viet Nam War; and/or 2 years of active duty is required for Veterans who served during the Gulf War (which amazingly has still not been declared over by Congress). Additionally, every Vet who applies for this benefit must have been honorably discharged.

Why should you investigate this?

1. Of the over 23 million Vets in the U.S. who could qualify for this benefit, only approximately 187,000 Vets are now receiving it.
2. **Success is all in the paperwork.** The paperwork might feel pretty daunting for the Vet who wants their application to be complete. Done right, the application could be approved and benefits could begin in 8-12 weeks after the application is submitted. If the application paperwork is done incorrectly and the application is declined, the Vet would have to re-apply all over again, and the wait for a second review of the paperwork can take many months.



3. **Most Vets who have financial resources will be in one of 2 situations:** *Pre-planning* for the time when their health will change, or *Crisis planning* when they need the benefit *NOW* due to the current costs they have for home care, medications, Assisted Living expenses, or nursing home costs.

No matter which situation you or your family member is in, your financial qualification for the benefit is a necessary part of the application. **And that's where you need the assistance of a Financial Advisor who can guide you through the process and help you with your current investment situation.**

To financially qualify for this Aid & Attendance benefit, the Vet may need to re-structure or re-title their personal assets, and then complete the application to show the monthly, non-reimbursed, recurring health care expenses they have for their own care, or for their Spouse. **Plus** the assets that you own individually and jointly must be placed on the application too. There are special forms to fill out which will need to be completed and sent in with the application to indicate the monthly health care expenses, along with a Doctor's report, and/or a facility report which itemizes the monthly expenses that are charged.

Many Vets have assets and financial resources which far exceed the limits which the Veterans Administration allows. His or her assets can be re-positioned or re-structured to allow the Vet to financially qualify for the benefit. By having clear guidance from a Financial Advisor who specializes in this program the Vet can usually qualify for a pension that you probably didn't even know existed. **Just be sure to complete any re-structuring or re-positioning work with the assets BEFORE submitting the application for the Aid & Attendance pension**, or there may be disqualification for the pension by not meeting the very strict financial requirements of the VA.

A word of caution! Do not let any Agent or service or attorney charge you to complete the application to the Veterans Administration for this benefit! There's an old law going back to the Civil War which prohibits **ANYONE** from charging the Veteran more than \$10 to help them apply for a benefit that they are already entitled to. Unfortunately, many unscrupulous Agents, Financial Advisors, or attorneys have recently been charging a family member of the Vet (instead of the Veteran), or their Trust to get around this law.



WHY is it important to plan NOW? Right now, there's only a 1-day look-back for your application for this benefit. What does that mean? The VA now permits a Veteran and his/her Spouse or Widow to re-position or re-title their financial assets **ONE DAY** before their application is submitted to help them qualify. With a Financial Advisor who specializes in this benefit, you can take advantage of the strategies that the VA permits to help you receive this benefit, no matter what amount of money you have saved for retirement.

Also, now there's a Bill in Congress waiting for approval that is suggesting that the 1-day look-back be changed to a 3-year look-back. **If it passes, the Veteran could lose out of this \$25,000+ additional annual benefit which helps them pay for long term care expenses, just because they didn't plan in advance.**

Best advice? Don't wait until a health crisis strikes. **PLAN** now so that **WHEN** your health changes you can take advantage of this little-known benefit that you as a Veteran or their family member are certainly entitled to.

Where can you get more information about the Aid & Attendance pension for wartime Vets?

1. You can always contact the VSO (Veterans Service Officer) in your county about this benefit, or look on the VA website: www.VA.gov . Unfortunately, there's not much information on the VA website.
2. You can attend a talk or workshop about the benefit to find out more information and to ask some questions.
3. You can call my office this week and we can discuss your individual situation.

Whether you're in a Crisis mode or in a Pre-planning mode for this VA benefit, you need the best information to help you make a decision. By doing some planning now, the transition can be much easier when you actually need some financial assistance to help pay for your care later on.



If you're in a Crisis mode now and your monthly expenses for care are quickly draining your savings and investment accounts, then be **SURE** to find a qualified Financial Advisor who can help you with the Aid & Attendance benefits you so rightly deserve.

There are Vets and their Spouses who do not have many assets and will need this benefit too. Some may not even have enough money to last a few more months. Finding out about the Aid & Attendance pension could be a real God-send.

Yes, the Aid & Attendance benefit has been one of the government's best-kept secrets. *Until Now.* Don't wait any longer to access or plan for this benefit which you earned through your service in our military. It can help you to breathe a big sigh of relief financially and help you to be prepared for the future when your health will change.

For more information about the Aid & Attendance Veterans program, contact Wilma Anderson @ (720) 344-0312, or email me: Info@WilmaAnderson.com, or visit my website: www.WilmaAnderson.com