

Information

Veterans' benefits are not awarded automatically.

Contact the state Division of Veterans' Services Helpline: 888-838-7697 or visit www.veterans.ny.gov or email DVAInfo@veterans.ny.gov

Education

- **Federal benefits**

The federal government offers several programs for veterans and service members seeking assistance for education or vocational training. Visit the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at www.va.gov or call 800-827-1000, or the NYS Division of Veterans' Services at 888-838-7697 for more information.

If you meet the requirements under the provisions of the GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011, you may be eligible for tuition and fees if attending private colleges and universities in New York and several other states. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

- **State Veterans Tuition Awards**

Eligible veterans are those who served in Vietnam, Afghanistan, or the Persian Gulf, have earned an Expeditionary Medal, and have received a discharge under honorable conditions. Contact the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) about tuition eligibility and assistance at www.hesc.ny.gov or call 888-697-4372.

- **Children of Veterans (Regents) Awards**

Provides eligible children of deceased veterans, those missing in action, or prisoners of war, or those service-connected disabled veterans with a disability rate of 40 percent or greater an annual, noncompetitive monetary award up to \$450 per year.

- **Military Service (MERIT) Recognition Scholarships**

Available to certain dependents of members of the armed forces or state organized militia who, any time after August 2, 1990, while in service performing their military duties including training, died, was severely and permanently disabled, or was declared missing in action.

For more info on available awards and scholarships, go to www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/military-corner.html.

- **Operation Recognition**

Awards high school diplomas to veterans who served during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War who left school before graduating. GED recipients are also eligible. Call 518-474-8940.

Career advancement

Under the Veterans Bill of Rights for Employment Services, veterans are entitled to priority service at all NYS Department of Labor offices in job referrals, employment counseling, testing, and other services. Visit www.labor.ny.gov/vets.

- **Review of discharge**

DVS Veterans benefits advisors can prepare and file discharge upgrade applications free of charge to the Discharge Review Board or the Board for Corrections of Military Records for each branch of the military. Contact DVS at 888-838-7697.

Civil service

- **Federal benefits**

On competitive exams only, there is a 10-point preference for eligible disabled veterans and a 5-point preference for wartime honorably discharged veterans. Some requirements may be waived and special priority given in particular job categories. Unremarried surviving spouses, certain spouses, and mothers of disabled veterans may also be eligible for preference. Visit www.military.com.

- **State and local benefits**

Civil service examination fees are waived for honorably discharged veterans. Credit preferences and retention rights are available for disabled and nondisabled veterans for competitive positions. Some competitive positions are filled by appointment for qualified wartime veterans with disabilities. Visit www.cs.ny.gov/rp55 or call 518-233-3118 or 866-297-4356.

Automobile

- **Federal benefits**

Severely disabled veterans may qualify for a one-time payment of up to \$21,488.29 toward the purchase of an automobile or other conveyance. Automobile adaptive equipment grants are also available. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-auto-allowance.asp for more information.

- **State benefits**

Eligible New Yorkers can have the word "Veteran" printed on the upper left corner of their newly issued license, learner permit, or non driver photo ID card at no additional charge. This identification shows proof of service, making it easier to access veteran programs, benefits,



Assemblymember Lavine was honored to present proclamations to the families of two African-American Glen Cove residents who served proudly during World War II – Dr. Chester "Chet" Pierce and Sgt. Ralph Young, who died in service to his country, at the Memorial Day ceremony in Glen Cove.

and discounts. Apply at a NYS motor vehicle office. Auto registration and license plates are free for qualifying veterans who receive VA adaptive vehicle grants. Visit www.veterans.ny.gov/content/new-york-state-motor-vehicle-registration-fee-exemption.

Home loan guarantee

See www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans for information on how certain veterans and spouses may be eligible for loans from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to buy homes. Visit www.nyshcr.org or call 800-382-4663 to learn about low-interest mortgages through the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA).

Tax exemptions

- **Property**

Municipalities have the option to grant property tax exemptions for many eligible veterans. Examples include those who served during wartime, have received the Armed Forces, Navy, Marine Corps or Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, served in a combat zone, and are disabled. Additional exemptions may be provided by local school districts. Check with the Nassau County Assessors Office to determine the maximum exemption limits in your community. You can also visit www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/exemption/vetexempt.htm or call 888-838-7697 for more info.

- **Income**

Military pay received for active service as a member of the United States Armed Services in an area designated as a combat zone is exempt from New York State, New York City, and



Assemblymember Lavine had the honor of speaking to the Veterans at the Syosset VFW celebration of its 75th anniversary. He was especially moved by the tributes to late World War II Navy veteran and community leader Constantino ‘Gus’ Scutari.

Yonkers income taxes. Visit www.tax.ny.gov/pit/file/military_page.htm.

Blindness

- **Federal benefits**

Guide dogs and electronic and mechanical aids may be available. Visit www.ebenefits.va.gov.

- **State benefits**

An annuity is available to blind wartime veterans and qualified unremarried, surviving spouses plus a percentage increase for compensation and pension benefits administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the previous year. Visit www.veterans.ny.gov/content/new-york-state-blind-annuity-program.

Disability benefits

- **Compensation**

Veterans may apply for compensation for a service-connected disability at any time. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/compensation.

- **Non-service connected disability pension**

A monthly pension may be available for eligible wartime veterans with disabilities who are no longer able to work. One must be permanently and totally disabled or have reached the age of 65. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/pension.

- **Licenses and permits**

Veterans with a 40 percent or greater disability rating are eligible for low-cost hunting and fishing licenses and free use of state parks, historic sites, and recreational sites with a park pass. Visit store.usgs.gov/faq#US-Military or call 866-472-4332 to get one.

- **Hearing aids**

Eligible veterans can receive hearing aids, repairs, and batteries free of charge. Visit www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/hearing_aids.asp.

- **Clothing allowance**

Veterans may receive a clothing allowance to replace clothes damaged by a medicine or prosthetic or orthopedic device related to one’s service-connected disability.

Home accessibility grants

- **Federal benefits**

Veterans who are totally and permanently disabled may be eligible for grants to adapt their home to meet their wheelchair needs. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp.

- **State benefits**

Seriously disabled veterans who have received federal funds for houses with special fixtures can be exempt from property taxes. Non-remarried surviving spouses may transfer the exemption to any new residence. Visit www.veterans.ny.gov/content/property-tax-exemptions-veterans.

Nursing home care

Three state-run homes are in operation in our area for eligible veterans and their dependents: a 250-bed facility in St. Albans, Queens, a 252-bed facility in Montrose, Westchester County, and the 250 bed Long Island State Veterans Home on the campus of the State University at Stony Brook. Health-related care and nursing services are available at all facilities. Admission preference is based on severity of illness or disability.



Assemblymember Lavine speaks with a Korean War Veteran at the Westbury Senior Citizens Center.

Aid & Attendance and Housebound benefit

Veterans and survivors requiring the aid and attendance of another person, or are house-bound, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. Go to www.benefits.va.gov/pension/aid_attendance_housebound.asp.

Burial

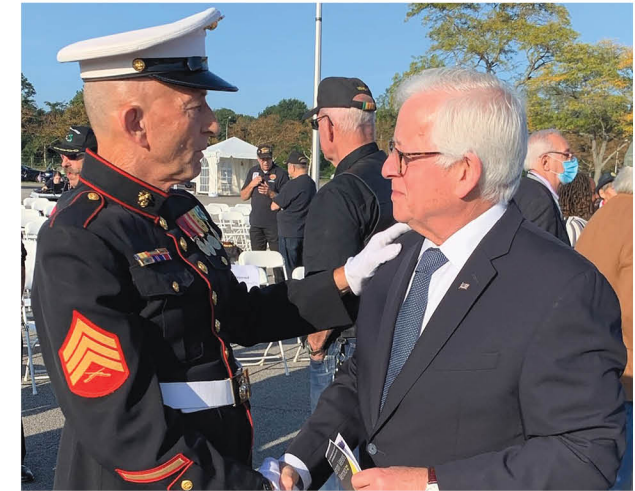
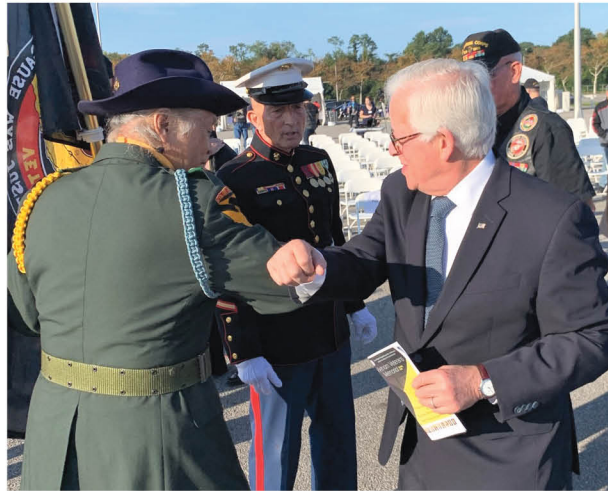
- **Federal benefits**

Qualifying veterans may be eligible for financial assistance for burial and plot expenses, burial in national cemeteries for themselves and certain family members, and an American flag to drape the casket and be given to the next of kin. Call 800-827-1000.

- **State benefits**

Burial expenses and the cost of headstones for indigent state veterans and certain family members are authorized by the county of the veteran’s residence. In addition, a supplemental burial allowance of up to \$6,000 is authorized for certain military personnel killed in combat or while on active duty in hostile or imminent danger zones on or after Sept. 29, 2003. Call 888-838-7697.

Assemblymember Lavine meets with veterans as he pays tribute to the more than 58,000 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War at a traveling half-sized replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at North Hempstead Beach Park.



Survivors' benefits (federal)

- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)**

Payments may be available to eligible spouses and certain dependents of veterans who died of service-related injuries or disease. Visit www.va.gov/survivors.

- **Surviving spouse pension**

Certain surviving spouses and single children of deceased wartime veterans may be eligible for a non-service related pension based on need. Minor children may be eligible even if the surviving spouse remarries.

Insurance

Designated beneficiaries of deceased persons covered by all forms of government insurance may submit their claims to the nearest counseling center of the state's Division of Veterans' Services. Visit www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp to convert a Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) policy after discharge.

Assemblymember Lavine's Legislative Accomplishments for Veterans

As a staunch advocate of veterans' affairs, Assemblymember Lavine was instrumental in the following bills being signed into law:

- \$5 million for the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Project to help veterans impacted by PTSD, traumatic brain injury or other health issues.
- \$1 million for services and expenses to suicide prevention efforts for veterans among others.
- \$5 million for permanent, emergency, and transitional housing for veterans in accordance with Article 2A of the Social Services Law.
- \$6,380,000 for the Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance Program.
- Funds to extend the Hire-a-Vet tax credit for employers and expanded tuition assistance to disabled veterans and all Gold Star families.
- \$50 million to fund the Nourish New York Program that helped to provide more than 300,000 healthy meals to veterans and military

families in New York facing food insecurity during the pandemic.

- \$500,000 for the Veterans Defense Program (VDP) including an additional \$220,000 for an expansion to Long Island.
- \$950,000 for the Legal Services Assistance Fund (LSAF) which helps provide criminal or civil legal services for veterans.

Assemblymember Lavine has always been a supporter of veterans and helped get several key bills passed which were then signed into law:

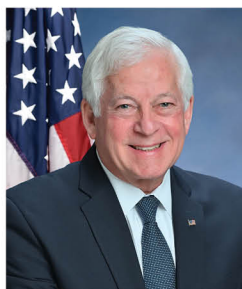
- **A.5719-A** – establishes Veterans Treatment Courts. This alternative to traditional criminal courts makes it possible for more veterans in our court system to receive the specially-tailored attention and support services they need in adjusting to life after the military.
- **A.1920** – establishes state veterans' cemeteries. Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery, which is situated on 162 acres along the eastern shore of Seneca Lake in the Finger Lakes region, is now the first state veterans' cemetery. It is located on what was formerly the Sampson Naval Training Station and Sampson Air Force Base, where

hundreds of thousands of service members were trained during World War II and the Korean War.

- **A.2203** – adds post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) to the list of informational portals required on the Division of Veterans' Services website.
- **A.2014** – allows veterans to receive mental health diagnoses from outside the VA in order to qualify for state benefits. This law ensures that federal policy will not prevent these veterans from receiving NYS benefits and services.
- **A.8094** – facilitates access to parks for veterans. This law requires the Division of Veterans Services (DVS) to consult with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Health, and the Office of Mental Health to review issues relating to veterans' abilities to access state parks, lands, and facilities in order to eliminate barriers to the restorative properties of nature.



A Message to Veterans from Assemblymember Charles D. Lavine



The state Assembly has been a strong ally for the nearly 1 million veterans and their families living in New York State, ensuring they receive the resources and services they've so bravely earned.

Enclosed is information about the many programs and services available through the New York State Division of Veterans' Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since benefits are not awarded automatically, veterans and their families must apply for them.

I am grateful for your selfless contributions to our country and pledge my continued dedication to meeting the needs of all veterans. If you have any questions or concerns about this or any other matter, please contact my district office.

Charles D. Lavine
Member of Assembly

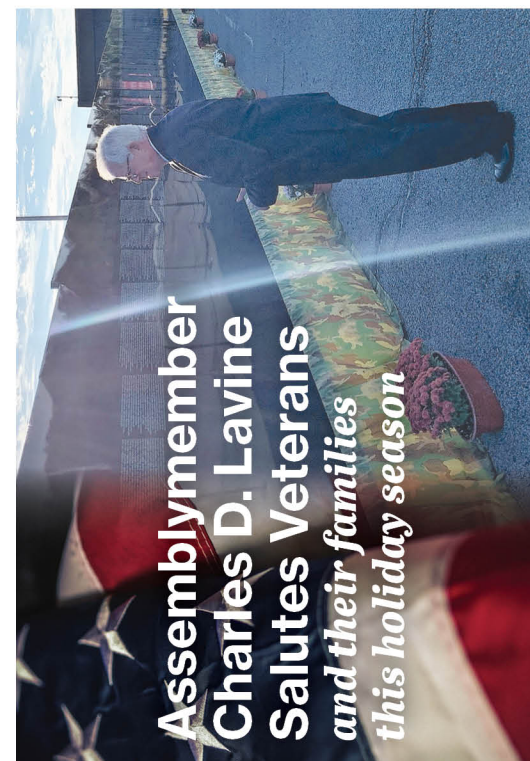
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Readjustment Counseling

Vet centers are located around the New York metro area to help veterans deal with readjustment issues. Veterans who want counseling can call one of the federal veterans centers listed below.

Visit www.va.gov for their addresses.

Babylon: 631-661-3930

Bronx: 718-367-3500

Brooklyn: 718-630-2830

Hicksville (Nassau): 516-348-0088

New York (Harlem): 646-273-8139

New York (Manhattan): 212-951-6866

Staten Island: 718-816-4499

White Plains: 914-682-6250

Woodhaven (Queens): 718-296-2871

Veterans Crisis Line:

1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or
text 838255

**Help for chemical dependency
or problem gambling, call:**
1-877-8-HOPENY (46-7369)

Homelessness:
1-877-424-3838