

Veterans Monetary Benefits

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The economic condition of the United States, covering the period beginning with the present financial depression, affecting as it has all branches of industry, commerce, and the monetary welfare of the country, has been responsible for a tremendous amount of misery, unhappiness, disaster and irreparable loss in the concerned aspects resulting from the misfortune. Whatever the basic causes of the more or less universal depression might be is for academic discussion. It may be said, however, that the immediate changes in laws relating to veterans welfare benefits were probably hastened by the financial condition of the United States Treasury as applying to income and expenditures.

By reason of the inability of the government to balance its budget, and the fact that the veterans welfare program took about 30 per cent of the yearly income to supply its needs as provided by law, it became necessary that something be done to relieve and equalize the financial burden. The result being that many of the existing benefits formerly granted veterans under the provisions of previous laws became null and void by the passage of Public Act No. 2, 73rd Congress, which was signed by the President on March 20, 1933.

This Act empowered the President to promulgate regulations and procedures covering benefits that might be granted to veterans or ex-service men of war-time or peace-time service, who had been honorably discharged from the Army or Naval forces of the United States, and to others who came within the concerned categories of certain benefits as allowed by law. All former laws applying to hospital care and treatment, domiciliary care, compensation and other allowances, disability allowance or retire-

ment pay to veterans and the dependents of veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, the Boxer Rebellion, and the World War were repealed by the provisions of Section 17 of the so-called Economy Act (Public No. 2, 73rd Congress).

It might be of interest to discuss on the distribution of expenditures as covering compensation, disability allowance, and pensions of the veterans welfare program during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, as shown by the records of the Veterans Administration. An appreciation of the vast amount of business, and cognizance of the expenditure of the huge sum of money made necessary to cover the entitlements may be had by calling attention to some of the facts.

At the close of the fiscal year, June 30, 1932, compensation benefits were being paid to 328,658 veterans whose disabilities were directly incurred in or aggravated by military or naval service, or were given the benefit of a presumptive service connection for same. The disbursements for the purpose of compensating these veterans who had served during the World War totalled \$189,540,380.76.

Analysis of the major disabilities for which compensation was being paid disclosed that 21% suffered from neuropsychiatric disabilities; 19% from tuberculosis; and 60% from general medical and surgical disabilities. The average monthly payment for all compensation awards \$41.12. Approximately 53% of the disabilities for which compensation was being paid were rated on a permanent and partial basis, 32% as temporary partial, 11% as permanent and total, and 4% as temporary total. In the neuropsychiatric group 52% of the permanent and total cases were found, while 27% were in the tuberculosis group.

The four States having the largest number of veterans receiving compensation were, New York, 26,638; California, 24,167; Pennsylvania, 21,768; and Ohio, 18,655. Of the foreign countries, Italy had the largest number, 556, as compared with 278 in Canada and 161 in British Isles.

On June 30, 1932, there were 2,904 women veterans receiving compensation benefits, classified as: Army Nurses Corps, 2,380; other army women, 12; Navy Nurses Corps, 120; yeomen (female) 2,380; marinettes, 5. And the major disabilities for which compensation was being paid were classified as: neuropsychiatric disease, 24%; tuberculosis, 30%; and general medical and surgical disabilities, 46%.

Allowances were being paid the dependents of 91,199 veterans who were rated on a temporary basis, being authorized for 84,357 wives, 162,116 children, 5,959 mothers, and 1,961 fathers. And there were 11,828 veterans receiving insurance payments for permanent and total disability. Records showed that compensation was being paid to the dependents of 97,448 veterans who died as a result of disabilities or injuries incurred in military or naval service during the World War. This compensation was being paid to 23,961 widows, 36,565 children, and 87,490 parents, at an average monthly payment of \$27.98. In addition to compensation approximately 67% of the dependents of veterans who died as a result of military or naval service were receiving monthly payments of either term or United States Government (converted) life insurance.

An analysis of the immediate cause of death disclosed that 23,885, or 25% of the total, were the result of battle injuries, and 68,507 or 70% the result of diseases. The dependents of 6,914 deceased veterans were residing outside the continental limits of the United States, 1,960 being in Italy, 703 in the British Isles, 603 in Poland, 652 in the Philippine Islands, and 545 in Puerto Rico.

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