



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*American Legion Building
215 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
Nashville, TN 37243-1010
(615) 741-2931
TN.gov/veteran*

John A. Keys, Commissioner

A veteran is any person who served in the active military, naval or air service and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable (U.S. Code 38). The men and women of the Armed Forces are the treasure of America and a valuable natural resource. They will be the veterans of tomorrow. Approximately 513,000 veterans (and approximately 1.5 million dependents) live in the state of Tennessee. During fiscal year 2007-2008, Tennessee veterans and their families were awarded \$437,251,166 as a result of the work of the department's service delivery network. More than 59,439 referrals for service were made through the 13 statewide field offices and the Nashville claims office. The three State Veterans Cemeteries interred 1,747 veterans and dependents during fiscal year 2007-2008 and provided perpetual care of 23,320 gravesites.

The department actively participates in programs to educate citizens of the sacrifices made by patriots and the obligation to focus on their well-being. The department works with state and federal agencies to increase outreach programs and maximize services to veterans. It actively supports the United Tennessee Veterans Association in its efforts to ensure maximum coordination of veteran-related information and cooperation among veteran service organizations and stakeholders in Tennessee.

Mission

The department's mission is:

- To serve Tennessee's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion;
- To be the veterans' advocate by ensuring they receive quality care, support, entitlements and the recognition earned in service to the nation; and
- To enhance citizens' awareness of the sacrifices that veterans have made for us.

History

In 1921, an Ex-Serviceman's Bureau was established. Due to the inability of the small agency to provide adequate service for the increase of veterans after World War II, in 1945 the General Assembly created the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide statewide services. The department was placed under the Governor's office in 1959 as a staff division and once again established as a department in 1975. The General Assembly authorized the department to establish state veterans cemeteries in 1987. Legislation was approved in 1988 to establish state veterans homes under the direction of a board of directors appointed by the Governor. In 1991 the department was authorized to train and accredit county-employed veterans service officers.

Services

Field and Claims Divisions. Accredited employees represent veterans and their families by a power-of-attorney claims system to access earned entitlements and services. Employees file claims and review ratings for compensation, pension, educational allowances, loans, etc., under laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Counseling and referral are provided for services and benefits available through federal, state and local laws. Representation is provided to veterans and their families in the presentation, proof and establishment of all claims. Employees assist veterans to obtain a variety of services such as health care, military discharge review, employment referrals, housing, rehabilitation, training and education. An ongoing training program enhances knowledge and skills of the department's staff and provides certification of County Service Officers as mandated. Field representatives provide monthly training and assistance in their respective districts. Quarterly training is accomplished in each grand division with the annual certification session in Nashville.

Cemetery Division. Three state veterans cemeteries provide interments and perpetual care for eligible veterans and their dependents. Memorial ceremonies are conducted at the cemeteries during Veterans Day, Memorial Day and other special occasions to honor veterans.

State Veterans Cemeteries

East Tennessee
5901 Lyons View Pike
Knoxville, TN 37919
(865) 594-6776

West Tennessee
4000 Forest Hill-Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125
(901) 543-7005

Middle Tennessee
7931 McCrory Lane
Nashville, TN 37221
(615) 532-2238

Benefits and Claims Offices

James H. Quillen VA Medical Center
Bldg. 69, Room H115
Mountain Home, TN 37684
(423) 979-2957

Lowell Thomas State Office Building
225 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, Suite 110
Jackson, TN 38301
(731) 423-5614

State Office Building
601 South Concord Street, Suite 108
Knoxville, TN 37919
(865) 594-6158

State Office Building
540 McCallie Avenue, Suite 109
Chattanooga, TN 37402
(423) 634-7125

Veterans Memorial Building
90 East Spring Street
Cookeville, TN 38501
(931) 526-6929

Alvin C. York VA Medical Center
Building 7, Room G- 39
Murfreesboro, TN 37129-1236
(615) 225-6930

VA Medical Center
1310 24th Avenue South, Room G116, G118
Nashville, TN 37212-2637
(615) 327-5303 or 341-6964

204 North Main Street
Suite 12
Dickson, TN 37055
(615) 441-6224

1609 College Park Drive, Box 9
Morristown, TN 37813
(423) 587-7032

309 North Church Street, Suite G-2
Dyersburg, TN 38024
(731) 286-8344

Benefits and Claims Offices, Continued

State Office Building
170 North Main Street, 2nd Floor
Memphis, TN 38103
(901) 543-7397

VA Medical Center
1030 Jefferson Avenue
Room 6005A or 6006
Memphis, TN 38104
(901) 523-8990, Extension 5284

Claims Division
110 9th Avenue South, Room A-310
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 695-6385

5661 Screaming Eagle Boulevard
Room 114-G
Fort Campbell, KY 42223
(931) 431-3784

State Veterans Homes

Tennessee State Veterans Home—Murfreesboro Home
345 Compton Road
Murfreesboro, TN 37130
(615) 895-8850

W. D. "Bill" Manning Tennessee State Veterans Home
2865 Main Street
Humboldt, TN 38343
(731) 784-8405

Senator Ben Atchley Tennessee State Veterans Home
One Veterans Way
Knoxville, TN 37931
(865) 862-8100

Commissioner John A. Keys

Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs

John A. Keys is a lifelong resident of Memphis, Tenn. He attended Shelby County schools and Memphis State University, and he served six years in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserves. While in the Army, he graduated from NCO Academy at Fort Benning, Ga., in 1969, served with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam, and worked in Military Operations and Intelligence while stationed in Cu-Chi where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. After his discharge from the Army in 1971, Keys served until 1983 as regional veterans employment representative with the state Department of Employment Security where he was responsible for veterans' employment programs in 23 West Tennessee counties. Keys served as manager of veterans services for Shelby County from 1983 to January 2003 when he was appointed commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs by Governor Phil Bredesen. Commissioner Keys serves on the Tennessee State Veterans Homes Board, Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability, Tennessee Military Affairs Commission and MidSouth Healthcare Network VISN-9 Management Advisory Committee. Keys' life has been dedicated to public service and volunteer efforts on behalf of veterans and minorities. He serves on the Selective Service System District Appeal Board 579 of the state of Tennessee. He is a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, an alumnus of the Leadership Memphis Class of 1990 and a founding board member of Alpha Omega Veteran Services (one of the first homeless shelters in the nation). He is also chairman of the Governor's Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness, a member of the American Legion Post 27, and a life member of both VFW Post 11333 and AMVETS. Keys serves on the National Foreign Relations Commission of the American Legion and in numerous leadership roles which provide assistance to others.

