



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*215 Eighth Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37243-1010  
(615) 741-2931*

*Tennessee.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 young 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 500,000 veterans (and approximately one million dependents) live in the state of Tennessee. During fiscal year 2004-2005 Tennessee veterans and their families were awarded \$245,328,684 as a result of the work of the department's service delivery network. More than 48,416 referrals for service were made through the 13 statewide field offices and the Nashville claims office. The three State Veterans Cemeteries interred 1,714 veterans and dependents during fiscal year 2004-2005 and provided perpetual care of 15,700 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 focusing to ensure maximum coordination and cooperation of all veterans service organizations 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;
- 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 based 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

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

4000 Forest Hill-Irene Road  
Germantown, TN 38183  
(901) 543-7005

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

### Benefits and Claims Offices

James H. Quillen VA Medical Center  
Bldg. 69, Room 117  
Mountain Home, TN 37684  
(423) 926-1171, Ext. 7202

State Office Building  
617 Cumberland Avenue, Suite 213  
Knoxville, TN 37902-2518  
(865) 594-6158

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

VA Medical Center  
1310 24th Avenue South, Room 1A107  
Nashville, TN 37212-2637  
(615) 327-5303 or 327-5316

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

State Office Building  
225 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
Jackson, TN 38301  
(731) 423-5614

State Office Building  
540 McCallie Avenue, Suite 109  
Chattanooga, TN 37402  
(423) 634-6488

Alvin C. York VA Medical Center  
Building 7, Room 16  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129-1236  
(615) 893-1360, Ext. 3475

200 North Main Street  
Room 12, Arcade  
Dickson, TN 37055  
(615) 441-6224

1150 Henry Street  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 286-8344

## Benefits and Claims Offices, Continued

State Office Building  
170 North Main Street  
Memphis, TN 38103  
(901) 543-7395

Claims Division  
110 9th Avenue South, Room A-310  
Nashville, TN 37203  
(615) 741-1863

VA Hospital  
1030 Jefferson Avenue  
Room CEG19 Basement  
Memphis, TN 37104  
(901) 523-8990, Extension 5284

## State Veterans Homes

345 Compton Road  
Murfreesboro, TN 37130  
(615) 895-8850

2865 Main Street  
Humboldt, TN 38343  
(731) 784-8405

### Commissioner John A. Keys Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs

**John A. Keys** is a lifelong resident of Memphis, Tennessee. He attended Shelby County schools and Memphis State University; he served two years in the U.S. Army and four years in the Army Reserves. While in the Army, he graduated from NCO Academy at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in 1969, served with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam, and worked in Military Operations and Intelligence while stationed in Cu-Chi. 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 twenty-three 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. 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. Commissioner 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 and the Alumni-Leadership Memphis Class of 1990 and is an advisor for Alpha Omega Veteran Services (one of the first homeless shelters in the nation). He is chairman of the Customer Service Advisory Board at the Memphis VA Medical Center. He is a member of the American Legion Post 27, VFW Post 11333, and serves on the National Foreign Commission of the American Legion and in numerous leadership roles providing assistance to others.

