

# South Carolina State Veteran's Benefits

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The state of South Carolina provides several veteran benefits. This section offers a brief description of each of the following ones.

- Housing Programs
- Financial Assistance
- Employment
- Education
- Recreation
- Other

## **Veteran Housing Programs**

### **State Veterans Nursing Homes**

There are three facilities in South Carolina: the E. Roy Stone Veterans Pavilion (ERSP), which is located in Columbia, the Richard Michael Campbell (RMC) Veterans Nursing Home in Anderson, and the Veterans' Victory House (VVH) in Walterboro.

Admission to these facilities is limited to veterans who have been separated from the U.S. Armed Forces under general or honorable conditions and qualify as South Carolina residents who are in need of skilled or intermediate nursing home care. To obtain additional information, or to apply for admission, contact your local county veterans affairs officer or the nursing home. For details on each facility contact:

- ERSP, 2200 Harden Street, Columbia, SC 29203 Phone: 803.737.5301 Fax: 803.737.5364, [http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/dir\\_facilities.htm#CMT](http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/dir_facilities.htm#CMT)

- RMC, 4605 Belton Highway, Anderson, SC 29621, Phone: 864.261.6734 Fax: 864.261.6808, <http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/victoryhouse>
- VVH, 2461 Sidneys Road, Walterboro, SC 29488 Phone: 843.538.3000 Fax: 843.538.2757, <http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/campbell>



**ERSP**



**RMC**



**VVH**

## **Financial Assistance**

### **Active Duty Pay Relevant to the SC Department of Revenue & Taxation**

Non-resident armed services personnel, who are legal residents of other States, stationed within South Carolina by virtue of military orders are not subject to South Carolina income tax on their service pay. They are, however, subject to tax on any other income earned in South Carolina by spouses of service personnel. For more information, visit the Department of Revenue on the web at [www.sctax.org/default.htm](http://www.sctax.org/default.htm) or call 803.898.5700.

### **State Income Tax**

Active duty pay is taxable. Reserve & National Guard drill pay is not taxable. Up to \$11,700 of retired pay is tax free. If you are 65 or older, that amount increases to \$24,000

### **Tax Exemption for Compensation, Pension, Disability Retirement Pay and VA Payments**

Provides that federal tax exempt moneys received from pension or compensation provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or disability pay from the Armed Forces will not be included in SC tax. For more information, call 1.800.827.1000.

### **Income Tax Exemption on Retirement Pay**

Military Retirement Deduction --

- *Under the age of 65:* For 2017, the deduction is limited to \$8,800 (\$11,700 for 2018 / \$14,600 for 2019 / \$17,500 for 2020) for individual taxpayers under the age of 65. Taxpayers must have other earned income, other than the military retirement, to take the deduction. South Carolina earned income is generally income you receive for services you provide. It includes wages, salaries, tips, commissions and sub-pay. It also includes income earned from self-employment, business income or loss, partnership income or loss, farm income or loss and any other earned income taxed to South Carolina. Earned income does not include gambling or bingo winnings,

interest, dividends, social security benefits, IRA distribution, retirement plan or annuity benefits, unemployment compensation, deferred compensation or non-taxable income. It also does not include any amount you paid your spouse. Once the phase in is complete, the under age 65 military retirement deduction will be \$17,500 per taxpayer in 2020. In the case of married taxpayers who file a joint federal income tax return, the deduction allowed by this section shall be calculated separately as though they had not filed a joint return, so that each individual's deduction is based on the same individual's retirement income and earned income. (**Note:** Taxpayers under the age of 65 receiving military retirement income; but no earned income, would only be eligible for the retirement deduction of \$3,000.)

- *Age 65 and older:* An individual taxpayer who is age 65 and older who has military retirement may deduct \$21,000 for 2017 (\$24,000 for 2018, \$27,000 for 2019, \$30,000 for 2020) of military retirement income that is included in South Carolina income. For taxpayers age 65 and older, there are no requirements for other earned income. The deduction is phased in over five years beginning in 2016. Once the phase in is complete, the age 65 and older military retirement deduction will be \$30,000 per taxpayer in 2020.
- For more information, call (803) 898-5709.

### **Property Tax Exemption**

Provides that the dwelling house in which a veteran resides who has been rated as one hundred percent permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, an Ex-POW, or a Medal of Honor recipient may be tax exempt. The tax exemption applies to the surviving spouse and may be transferred when purchasing another dwelling. For more information, contact your county and municipal tax offices. The Department of Revenue can be found on the web at [www.sctax.org](http://www.sctax.org), or call 803.898.5700.

### **Property Taxes - Homestead Exemption**

All persons who have been declared permanently and totally disabled by the Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, other state or federal agencies, are eligible for a homestead exemption in an amount set by the General Assembly. This also applies to persons over age 65. For more information, contact your county and municipal tax offices.

### **Specially Adapted Housing**

Provides for the exemption of state, county, and municipal taxes on the residence of veterans who have lost the use of their lower extremities or who have paralysis of one lateral half of the body resulting from injury to the motor centers of the brain. For more information, contact your county and municipal tax offices. The Department of Revenue can be found on the web at [www.sctax.org](http://www.sctax.org), or call 803.898.5700.

### **Parking Fee Exemption**

Provides for an exemption of municipal parking meter fees when a veteran's vehicle bears a disabled veteran ("V" tag), Purple Heart or Medal of Honor license plate. For more information, contact your county and municipal government offices.

## **Employment**

### **Veterans Preference**

Preference will be granted to eligible members for employment and/or an appointment in public departments or public works operating on a merit system.

Eligible members:

- Must be Honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the U.S.
- Must possess the skills and knowledge required for the position involved.

### **Veterans Reemployment Rights**

The Federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), enacted in October 1994, provides reemployment protection and other benefits for veterans and employees who perform military service. It clarifies the rights and responsibilities of National Guard and Reserve members, as well as their civilian employers. USERRA was significantly updated in 1996 and 1998 and applies almost universally to all employers, regardless of the size of their business. Contact the US Department of Labor at 1.866.487.2365, or the US Department of Defense Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves (ESGR) at 1.800.336.4590, or visit them on the web at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil).

### **Credit of State Retirement for Military Service**

State employees called to, or returning to, active duty may continue with the state's retirement program if they continue to make payments as normal. State employees can buy credit towards state retirement based on their military time.

## **Education**

### **Education Assistance (Free tuition for certain veteran's children)**

Provides a tuition waiver for qualified children of certain military veterans applying to or enrolled in a South Carolina state supported college, university or post high school technical education school; or acceptance into a dual enrollment/early college credit program prior to graduating high school. Qualifying veterans and students must meet certain residency requirements. For a complete list of veteran eligibility requirements, and state supported institutions, please reference page four of the application. If you have any additional questions, please contact our office at 803.647.2434. Click [here](#) to download the application

## **Recreation**

### **Free Hunting and Fishing Licenses**

Provides for free hunting/fishing license to disabled veterans. License must be applied for directly from SC Department of Natural Resources showing proof of disability. For more information, call SCDNR at 803.734.3838, or visit them on the web at [www.dnr.sc.gov](http://www.dnr.sc.gov).

### **State Parks Totally Disabled Persons**

Provides that any South Carolina resident who is a permanently and totally disabled veteran may enter any state park at a reduced rate upon presentation of supporting disability documentation. The veteran may also apply for a reduced fee “Palmetto Passport.” Certain services may require an additional fee. For more information, call South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism at 803.734.0156, or visit them on the web at [www.southcarolinaparks.com](http://www.southcarolinaparks.com).

### **Admissions Tax Exemption**

Provides for the exemption of admissions taxes to athletic contests in which junior American Legion athletic teams are participants unless the proceeds are given to individual players in the form of salary or otherwise. For more information, call 803.612.1171.

## **Other State Veteran Benefits**

### **Credit of State Retirement for Military Service**

An active member of one of the retirement systems administered by the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority may also establish up to six years of service credit for any period of military service for which he or she does not already have service credit in one of the correlated defined benefit plans. Go to [www.retirement.sc.gov](http://www.retirement.sc.gov) and log into Member Access to request a cost estimate.

### **Special License Plates**

Upon establishing proof of eligibility to entitlement, the S.C. Department of Public Safety may issue special motor vehicle license plates to the following:

- National Guard
- National Guard Retirees
- Purple Heart Recipients
- Disabled Veterans
- U.S. Armed Forces Retirees
- Ex-Prisoners of War
- Medal of Honor Recipients
- Pearl Harbor Survivors
- Normandy Invasion Survivors
- Marine Corps League
- Gold Star Family

For more information, visit the Department of Motor Vehicles on the web at SCDMV Online, or call 803.896.5000.



### **Veterans Cemetery**

The M.J. "Dolly" Cooper Veterans Cemetery opened December 2007 in Anderson. Burial is open to honorably discharged SC resident veterans and their spouses. There is no charge for the veteran's burial and a small fee for the spouse. Dependent children may be eligible for burial. As of 30 June 2017, 2,722 Veterans, spouses and dependents, have been buried with another 5,718 registered (pre-certified) with the cemetery for burials in the future. "Pre-certified" means the cemetery has determined eligibility after receiving, reviewing and keeping on file copies of a veteran's DD-214 or discharge document and marriage certificate so when a need arises, scheduling a burial can be done without delay. For eligibility information and a Pre-Certification Application form, click on the links on this page.

The State of South Carolina through the National Cemetery Administration State Cemetery Grant Program received a grant to build and initially equip this cemetery. Upon completion, operating and maintaining the cemetery was turned over to the State of South Carolina, as part of the South Carolina Office of Veterans Affairs. Phase I of cemetery construction consisted of 30 acres with an administration office building, a Committal Shelter, Flag Plaza, Memorial Walk, four Columbarium Walls, maintenance bays and buildings with approximately 23 acres designated for over 16,000 burials or cremation interments.



**M.J. "Dolly" Cooper Veterans Cemetery  
140 Inway Drive  
Anderson, SC 29621  
864.332.8022**

It is the policy of cemetery administration to assist every veteran and her/his family in any way that we can to include verifying service records, determining eligibility, helping obtain service records from the National Personnel Records Center and providing names and phone numbers of other veteran agencies who provide other services (health, death benefits, etc.). The cemetery office is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is closed on federal and state holidays. The cemetery is open seven days a week year-round. During Eastern Standard Time, the hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and are 8:30 a.m. to dusk during Daylight Saving Time. Personal visits to the cemetery are encouraged. For additional info refer to <http://va.sc.gov/cemetery.html>.

### **Recording of Discharges**

A certified copy of the recorded discharge may be obtained upon request. Any person desiring a certified copy of any discharge or certificate of lost discharge, may apply to the County Clerk of Court or the County Veterans Affairs Officer in which the discharge or certificate of lost discharge is registered and shall be furnished a certified copy. Fees for furnishing a certified copy of discharge or DD Form 214 may be established by each county, but may not exceed fifty cents.

### **Marriage, Birth, Death and Divorce Verification**

Provides for the verification of marriage, birth, death, and divorce records without cost when such is required by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the S.C. Division of Veterans Affairs, the County Veterans Affairs Offices, or any out of state Veterans Affairs entities. For more information, call 803.734.0200.

### **Credit of State Retirement for Military Service**

An active member of one of the retirement systems administered by the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority may also establish up to six years of service credit for any period of military service for which he or she does not already have service credit in one of the correlated defined benefit plans. Go to [www.retirement.sc.gov](http://www.retirement.sc.gov) and log into Member Access to request a cost estimate.

### **South Carolina Military Family Relief Fund**

The South Carolina Military Family Relief Fund (SCMFRF), signed into law in 2004 by Governor Mark Sanford, provides monetary grants to families of South Carolina National Guard members and South Carolina residents serving in the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve components who were called to active duty as a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

- [SC Military Family Relief Fund Brochure](#) (Word)
- [SC Military Family Relief Fund Application](#) (Word)

### **Veterans Trust Fund**

The Veterans' Trust Fund of South Carolina was established to serve the veterans of South Carolina by initiating, and assisting established veteran supported programs to enhance the quality of life of our veterans and their families. The Veterans' Trust Fund Board of Trustees emphasizes the education of South Carolina citizens of the values of patriotism and service to our Nation, for veterans' sacrifices made on behalf of our freedom. In so doing, provides financial assistance through the awarding of grants for worthy causes that benefit the veterans of South Carolina. For Grant seeker guidelines, forms, and instructions refer to <http://va.sc.gov/veteranstrustfund.html>.

### **Presentation of the State Flag to Families of Deceased Members of the South Carolina National Guard**

Provides that the State Adjutant General's Office shall present to the family of each deceased member of the South Carolina National Guard a flag of the State of South Carolina, appropriate for use as a burial flag, upon application of a member of the family of the deceased. For more information, call 803.734.0200.

### **State VA Contact Info**

- South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs, 1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 369, Columbia, South Carolina 29201 Phone: 803.734.0200 / Fax: 803.734.4014 / E-mail: [va@scdva.sc.gov](mailto:va@scdva.sc.gov)  
Hours: 8:30am - 5:00pm, Monday - Friday
- Federal Benefits Information - VA Regional Office 1.800.827.1000

- William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center (Columbia, SC) 1.800.293.8262
- Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center (Charleston, SC) 1.888.878.6884
- Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center (Augusta, GA) 1.800.836.5561
- U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs <https://www.va.gov>
- SC County Veterans' Affairs Officers <https://palmettovets.org/find-a-cvao>

**State Veterans' Affairs County Offices**

Abbeville .....864.366.6690 Ext. 2208  
 Aiken .....803.642.1545  
 Allendale .....803.584.4226  
 Anderson .....864.260.4036  
 Bamberg .....803.245.3266  
 Barnwell .....803.541.1057  
 Beaufort .....843.255.6880  
 Berkeley .....843.377.8506  
 Calhoun .....803.874.3816  
 Charleston .....843.974.6360  
 Cherokee .....864.487.2579  
 Chester .....803.385.6157  
 Chesterfield .....843.623.2482  
 Clarendon .....803.435.2527  
 Colleton .....843.549.1412  
 Darlington .....843.398.4130  
 Dillon .....843.774.1427  
 Dorchester .....843.832.0050  
 Edgefield .....803.637.4012  
 Fairfield .....803.635.4131  
 Florence .....843.665.3045  
 Georgetown .....843.545.3330  
 Greenville .....864.467.7230  
 Greenwood .....864.450.9268  
 Hampton .....803.914.2085/2087  
 Horry .....843.915.5480  
 Jasper .....843.726.7727  
 Kershaw .....803.425.1521  
 Lancaster .....803.283.2469  
 Laurens .....864.984.4041  
 Lee .....803.484.5129  
 Lexington .....803.785.8400  
 Marion .....843.423.8255  
 Marlboro .....843.479.5622  
 McCormick .....864.852.2212  
 Newberry .....803.321.2161  
 Oconee .....864.638.4231  
 Orangeburg .....803.533.6156  
 Pickens .....864.898.5926



Richland .....803.576.1908  
Saluda .....864.445.4500 Ext. 2268  
Spartanburg .....864.596.2553  
Sumter .....803.436.2302/2303  
Union .....864.429.1605  
Williamsburg .....843.355.9321 Ext. 6301  
York .....803.909.7525

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Visit the South Carolina Veterans Affairs website <http://va.sc.gov> for contact information and benefits assistance.

[Source: <http://www.military.com/benefits/content/veteran-state-benefits/south-carolina-state-veterans-benefits.html> | JAN 2020 ++]