

Guidelines for Honorary High School Diplomas for Veterans of World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War

Introduction

In recognition of the efforts and sacrifices of veterans who served in World War II and the Korean War, the 2001 and 2002 General Assembly designated the first full week in September and the first full week of November as Virginia World War II Veterans and Korean War Veterans Appreciation Weeks, beginning in September 2001 and November 2002, respectively. The General Assembly found that between 1939 and 1945, and between 1950 and 1953, many young persons from Virginia and other states left school to serve in the armed forces as the United States fought World War II and the Korean War. These individuals made great sacrifices and suffered economic and personal loss in order to protect their country and its people and to defend humanity.¹

In recognition of the service of Vietnam veterans, the Board of Education has extended the issuance of honorary diplomas to Vietnam War veterans who served in the country of Vietnam between 1961 and 1975 who were also unable to continue their education upon returning home.

Many of these young people were not able to continue their education upon returning home because of financial hardship and other personal reasons. Despite educational constraints, these veterans² “reentered society and made significant contributions to our country through hard work as civilians, while gaining substantial knowledge and skills through work.”³ They “have earned and do deserve our esteem and gratitude and our acknowledgement that without their sacrifices, our lives would not be the same as they are today.”⁴

Requirements of the Code of Virginia

Pursuant to §§ 22.1-17.4 and 2.2-3309.1 of the Code of Virginia, World War II and Korean War veterans who were unable to complete their high school education may apply for a Commonwealth of Virginia World War II or the Korean War Veteran Honorary High School Diploma if they meet the criteria specified by the Board of Education.

Any World War II or Korean War veteran may apply for an honorary high school diploma by filing with the board a written statement declaring that:

¹ SB 1210, General Assembly 2001.

² The term *veteran* means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. 38 USC § 101.

³ SB 1210, *supra*.

⁴ *Id.*

1. The veteran served in a branch of the United States Armed Forces during the years between 1939 and 1945 or between 1950 and 1953;
2. The veteran was drafted or enlisted in the United States Armed Forces; and
3. The veteran was unable to resume his education upon returning to civilian life.

While not specifically required by the Code, the Board of Education has extended the issuance of honorary diplomas to Vietnam War veterans.

Virginia Board of Education Requirements

Any veteran of World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War who is interested in receiving the Commonwealth of Virginia World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran Honorary High School Diploma must submit a statement that includes the following information:

1. The veteran's full name;
2. Dates of service;
3. Statement declaring he was drafted or did enlist in the United States Armed Forces and that the veteran was unable to resume his education upon returning to civilian life;
4. If a Vietnam War veteran, he served in the country of Vietnam between 1961 and 1975.

Additional information needed to honor this request will include the name of the person (if other than the veteran) requesting the diploma, contact phone number and address for mailing the diploma. The information may be submitted by the veteran, by his or her family, or by any individual or veterans' organization on behalf of the veteran.

While the Code of Virginia requires that honorary diplomas be issued annually during Virginia World War II and Korean War Veterans Appreciation Weeks, the Virginia Board of Education will issue the honorary diploma to eligible veterans upon request at any time during the year.

To ensure that the honorary diploma will be available by Virginia World War II and Korean War Veterans Appreciation Weeks, the first full weeks in September and November, the information must be submitted to the Department of Education no later than two weeks in advance.

The statement should be mailed to:

Veterans Honorary High School Diploma Program
Veterans Education
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120