

Evolution of the Pension Legislation for Union Army Veterans^a

Law or Act	Newly eligible persons	Pension rate system	Observations
July 22, 1861	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular army and volunteers who had been wounded or otherwise disabled in the service 2. Widows or legal heirs of those who died in the service. 	Same benefits to volunteers that those conferred on persons disabled in the regular army (half pay pensions for life to disabled persons.)	Pensions were used as inducement to promote voluntary enlistment.
July 14, 1862 "General Law"	The claimant had to show that his disability was incurred as a direct consequence of the performance of his military duty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pension rates graded according to rank from 8 to 30 dollars per month in cases of total disability. 2. Fractional pensions were to be given within each rank for partial disability, e.g. fractions of 8 for privates. 	Its purpose was to overcome the discrepancies and uncertainties of existing provisions.
July 4, 1864		Introduction of statutory rates for certain permanent specific disabilities of severe character.	It was felt that a "total disability" status, and its correspondent rate was inadequate to compensate for the most shocking injuries.
June 6, 1868		14 additional permanent specific disabilities were provided for.	Inability to perform kinds of labor requiring "education and skills" was provided for in addition to manual labor.
March 3, 1873 "Consolidation Act"		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to this time, a recruit could not get fractions of statutory rates, but only fractions of the total disability rate. 2. From now on, ratings for conditions other than specific disabilities were to be given in fractions of 18 (minimum 2/18, maximum 17/18.) 	This new rating system tried to overcome the difficulties to distinguish between inability to perform manual labor and other sort of activities, by increasing the discretionary powers of the Commissioner of Pensions.
January 25, 1879 "Arrears Act"			This Act would make the prospect of obtaining a large sum of arrears a constant stimulus to the presentation of new claims.

^aFrom Glasson, William H. "Federal Military Pensions in the United States" (1918) and "Synopsis of Pension Laws of the United States" (1928) .

Evolution of the Pension Legislation for Union Army Veterans

Law or Act	Newly eligible persons	Pension rate system	Observations
March 3, 1879			<p>The Arrears Act was modified to do away some of the worst inequalities and abuses possible under the terms of the original Act.</p>
July 27, 1890 "Disability Pensions Law"	Incapacitated persons (to perform manual labor) who served ninety days or more and had been honorably discharged.	People applying under this law would receive pension rates between \$12 and \$6 per month proportionate to the degree of inability to earn a support at the discretion of the Pension Bureau.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Persons already pensioned under the General Law were permitted to apply under this Act and vice versa, but no person could receive more than one pension covering the same period; 2. Pensioners already receiving small rates under the General Law would find it possible to receive larger pensions under this new law, because under the latter they could be rated for disabilities not of service origin.
March 2, 1895		All pensioners, who are or will be pensioned at less than \$6 per month, should have their pensions increased to \$6 per month.	
February 6, 1907	Any person who served ninety days or more, was honorably discharged, and had reached the age of 62 or over, should be placed upon the pension roll.	62 years old persons would receive \$12 per month, \$15 at 70 and \$20 at 75.	Since April 13, 1904, the Bureau of Pensions was using this advanced-age pension system according to Order No. 78. Therefore, the Act of 1907 only made this principle into law.
May 11, 1912		Monthly rate of the pension is to vary according to both age and length of service, starting from \$13 for 90 days of service at age 32, up to \$30 for 3 years of service at age 75.	
June 10, 1918		The minimum pension rate for any veteran is set at the minimum under the Service and Age system.	