August 5, 2019

VETERANS
MONTHLY INFORMATION PACKAGE

FLAGLER COUNTY

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Feel free to make copies and distribute throughout your organization.
VA’s VetSuccess on Campus Program marks 10th anniversary

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service in June celebrated a decade of the VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) Program, which supports service members, Veterans and eligible dependents as they complete their education and obtain viable careers.

The VSOC program, which provides dedicated vocational rehabilitation counselors on VSOC school locations to support eligible students, began as a pilot initiative at the University of South Florida in 2009, and, since then, has expanded to support 104 schools across the country.

“VA is committed to ensuring eligible beneficiaries have the opportunity to achieve their career objectives,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The VSOC program is a great example of how VA is delivering on that commitment.”

VSOC assists participants by helping to guide their career paths, reach educational and career targets and access their VA benefits. Last year, the VSOC program assisted over 44,000 participants in pursuit of their educational goals through on-campus benefits assistance and counseling.

For more information on the VSOC program, visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/vsoc.asp.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 5, 2019

VA extends Agent Orange presumption to ‘Blue Water Navy’ Veterans

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for “Blue Water Navy” Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

These Veterans may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law June 25, 2019, and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2020. They may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

The bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act gives VA until Jan. 1, 2020, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, VA is complying with the law that Congress wrote and passed.

“VA is dedicated to ensuring that all Veterans receive the benefits they have earned,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water Veteran community and minimize the impact on all Veterans filing for disability compensation.”

Blue Water Navy Veterans are encouraged to submit disability compensation claims for conditions presumed to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Veterans over age 85 or with life-threatening illnesses will have priority in claims processing.

Veterans who previously were denied for an Agent Orange related presumptive condition can file a new claim based on the change in law. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy Veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the Veterans’ service.

The new law affects Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, as defined in Public Law 116-23. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

To qualify, under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e).

Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or similar acneform disease
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus Type 2
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin’s disease
- Ischemic heart disease
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Parkinson’s disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma).


Veterans seeking more information should contact their Veterans Service Officer, call VA’s toll-free number at 800-827-1000 or visit the VA Blue Water Navy Agent Orange website.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 29, 2019

VA achieves critical milestone in its Electronic Health Record Modernization Program

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently transferred the health records of 23.5 million Veterans to a Cerner Corp. data center, setting the stage for the records to be processed this summer in support of VA’s and Department of Defense’s (DoD) common electronic health record solution.

This initial data migration phase of VA’s Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM), which began in late spring, is an important milestone reflecting the decision to replace Veterans Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) with the Cerner Millennium EHR solution that powers DoD’s Military Health System (MHS GENESIS).

“For decades, VA and DoD have been struggling to achieve interoperability and seamlessly share patient records between our health systems — placing an unfair burden on our Veterans and their families,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “No Veteran, family member or caregiver should have to carry boxes of paper, medical and service records around. This data migration is the first step to solving that problem for good.”

To date, over 78 billion records have been compiled from all VA medical centers, accounting for 50 terabytes (equivalent to about 850,000 hours of music) of data storage across 21 clinical areas of patient health records, which includes lab results; pharmacy prescriptions; inpatient and outpatient diagnoses and procedures; and other medical data of both living and deceased Veterans.

New data will move into the Cerner system automatically from VistA in near real time, and then make its way to the Cerner Millennium EHR, which will provide shared access with VA, DoD and community care providers. As future phases are completed, service members’ medical records from their years of active duty will reside in one comprehensive EHR.

This modernization effort moves VA one step closer toward achieving an interoperable EHR system that will improve military career transitions and drive better clinical outcomes.

For more information about VA’s Electronic Health Record Modernization, visit https://www.ehrm.va.gov/.

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Disclaimer of Hyperlinks

The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the linked web sites, or the information, products or services contained therein. For other than authorized VA activities, the Department does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. All links are provided with the intent of meeting the mission of the Department and the VA website. Please let us know about existing external links which you believe are inappropriate and about specific additional external links which you believe ought to be included by emailing newmedia@va.gov.
Veterans have opportunity to grow with USDA and farming resources

Assistance with land, equipment and training

Few pairings more closely align than Veterans and farming. The skill sets developed in military service match many of the characteristics of a successful agricultural professional. Whether it’s a sense of duty, responsibility and accountability for completing the mission, or being organized and disciplined, Veterans typically transition naturally into farming, ranching, and other agricultural opportunities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture knows what Veterans bring to the table: a strict adherence to rules and schedules, the ability to problem solve quickly and creatively, and strong work ethic. In return, USDA is committed to assisting Veterans across the country to keep America’s food supply safe and secure.

In 2018, USDA’s Farm Service Agency provided $64.5 million in direct and guaranteed farm operating loans to Veterans—and Veterans have preference. Veteran farmers and ranchers receive certain preferences under most USDA farm credit and farmland conservation programs. They are eligible for increased cost share assistance, additional financial incentives, and funding preferences for engaging in conservation efforts.

For Veterans living in rural America, USDA has additional resources to strengthen and empower skilled Veteran leaders to support the communities they know and love.

“Nearly one quarter of Veterans, approximately 5 million, live in rural areas,” said Bill Ashton, USDA Military Veteran Agricultural Liaison. “They [Veterans] can be a positive force for our communities. USDA is committed to making our programs accessible to help Veterans start or grow a career and maximize the potential talent of this population.”

USDA’s Rural Development has more than 40 loan, grant, and technical assistance programs including support to:

- Purchase and develop land and facilities
- Purchase equipment and supplies
- Refinance for job expansion
- Finance for energy efficiency improvements

Veterans in urban areas also have resources available. Whether its backyard or rooftop farming or cutting-edge technologies in intensive indoor hydroponic or aquaculture farms, USDA can help urban Veterans explore opportunities in agriculture. USDA’s Urban Agriculture Toolkit is a great place to start.

USDA ensures that Veterans looking to return home or start a new career on a farm or in a rural community have the tools and opportunities needed for success. Resources are available in every aspect of the agricultural industry, including Entrepreneurship, Education and Employment.
USDA’s Veteran website serves as a one-stop navigator for Veterans looking to learn more and support the critical mission of preparedness and defense of America’s food and agriculture sectors.
Veterans wanted to work at military exchanges downrange

If you are a veteran who would like to return to the Middle East, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, or AAFES, may have a job for you.

AAFES is currently recruiting veterans for jobs “downrange.” Right now, jobs are open in Kuwait, but positions frequently come available in 41 stores in eight countries in the Middle East, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

Current openings include safety and security managerial positions, courier, logistics technicians and service business technicians.

According to AAFES, salary is commensurate with experience and, although the jobs start at $33,000 for salaried positions and range between $11 and $22 an hour, downrange employees get free housing and meals at installation dining facilities.

Deployments can last from six months to a year, with an option to extend to two years. After a deployment, employees are eligible to apply for other jobs within the system.

“When the exchange hires veterans for downrange assignments, these former service members draw on the same strong work ethic, commitment and loyalty they used to serve our country,” said AAFES senior enlisted adviser Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Luis Reyes. “Many have already served downrange.”

AAFES officials said veterans who have held security clearances are highly desired because they can be employed more quickly than employees who need background checks.
The Navy Exchange Service and Marine Corps Exchange each have job openings, but none are in active areas of operations. Information on downrange jobs at AAFES can be found at its website. NEX jobs are posted at its site, and the Marine Corps Exchange advertises its openings through the individual stores’ websites.
Want to be a Wildland Firefighter? Montana is Training Veterans for Free

Montana's Veterans Green Corps is training Veterans to become Wildland Firefighters

Veterans Green Corps (VGC) is a field-based opportunity for post 9/11 era Armed Forces Veterans and Service Members modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps. The VGC program is an experience that provides on the job training focusing in Wildland Firefighting and chainsaw technical skills. The Veterans Green Corps is based in the Central Divide (Helena, Montana) region. Trainings are largely field based and are provided through a joint partnership with the Forest Service. Project work typically includes fuels reduction and thinning projects however it may also include other types of conservation service. Participants in the past have been called upon to support wildland fire suppression efforts in Montana.

A Veteran who is in the program shared this about the Veterans Green Corps on Reddit:

- *The training program is 11 weeks long.*
- *Gives you all the qualifications you need to be a wildland firefighter including S-212 Chainsaw certs, S-130/190 (Red Card/Incident Card required by all wildland firefighters).*
- *Amazing networking opportunities with United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other federal organizations that hire directly out of the program in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. If you want a job with a federal service after this term you are basically guaranteed a job.*
- *You get paid to go camping in some of the most beautiful spots in the country.*
- *All food is provided while you’re out and we eat GOOD. It’s not crappy backpacking food. We have fish curry, chicken and rice, bacon, eggs, you name it. All fresh, all cooked by ourselves, amazing food.*
- *The camaraderie is second to none. It seriously feels just like the Army because you’re working 8 days at a time with your crew. You guys camp together, hang out by the fire at night. It’s seriously so much fun and I haven’t felt this camaraderie since leaving the Army.*
• You’re paid a living stipend and also get an education award of $1,250 once you finish your 11 weeks. I plan to use mine to get my EMT cert. You can also use it for really random things like training to be a white water rafting guide, other types of outdoor leadership courses, it’s very non-restrictive.

Learn more and apply for this program at: https://mtcorps.org/join/opportunities-for-veterans/veterans-green-corps/
USDA announces $16 Million funding opportunity to support Veteran farmers and ranchers

The 2501 program offers grants to organizations that reach veterans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced up to $16 million in available funding to help Veteran and socially disadvantaged farmers. This funding is granted by USDA’s 2501 program (Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program) to community-based organizations, not-for-profits and higher education institutions. The goal for applicants of these grants is to empower and support their agricultural communities with education, training, demonstrations, and conferences on farming and agribusiness, and by increasing access to USDA’s programs and services.

*Please note these grants may be awarded to organizations serving Veterans, not directly to individuals.*

“All farmers and ranchers deserve equal access to USDA programs and services,” said Mike Beatty, director of the USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement. “2501 grants go a long way in fulfilling our mission to reach historically underserved communities and ensure their equitable participation in our programs.”

Also read: Veterans have opportunity to grow with USDA and farming resources

For 30 years, the 2501 Program has helped reach socially disadvantaged agricultural producers – farmers and ranchers who have experienced barriers to service due to racial or ethnic prejudice. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded the program’s reach to Veterans. The 2018 Farm Bill boosts mandatory funding for the program through FY 2023. With 2501 Program grants, nonprofits, institutions of higher education and Indian Tribes can support underserved and veteran farmers and ranchers through education, training, demonstrations, and conferences on farming and agribusiness, and by increasing access to USDA’s programs and services.
Since 1994, the 2501 Program has awarded 451 grants totaling more than $103 million. Among recent 2501 projects, an FY 2018 grant awarded to the Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance in Okolona, Mississippi helped agricultural community leaders connect senior farmers and new and beginning farmers to preserve farming legacies. A 2501 grant to Florida International University helped veterans and young urban farmers build sustainable urban agriculture operations in South Florida.

Eligible 2501 Program applicants include not-for-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and a range of higher education institutions serving African-American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities.

The deadline for applications is August 15, 2019. See the request for applications for full details.
Research finds veterans earn more than non-veterans

By: Brian Mackley

A new study conducted by the University of Akron looked to see if there was a difference between wages earned by military veterans compared with non-veterans.

The study found that military veterans earned higher wages, averaging nearly $26 an hour while non-veterans averaged just $21 an hour.

The study, titled “The veteran wage differential,” looked at average wages of military veterans and non-veterans across the U.S. between 2005 and 2015. It was conducted by two University of Akron professors, Dr. Francesco Renna and Dr. Amanda Weinstein.

“Many people are surprised when I show them that veterans tend to have higher wages than non-veterans,” Weinstein said in a statement.

They associated the higher wages veterans earn to a number of factors, including the fact that veterans have higher levels of work experience, are often older and more likely to be married and have children.

Other factors may be the veterans population tends to choose to enter occupations and industries that require more education and higher skill sets, like engineering, health care and government, according to the study.

The third main set of factors the study attributed to the higher wages were skills veterans gain in the military that set them up for success in the civilian world, such as greater cognitive and people skills.

The study looked only at wage and salary income from employment and did not consider the potential benefits veterans can earn, such as disability pay, G.I. Bill stipends, pensions or health care coverage.

According to their research, veterans could have increased their wages even more if they would choose to work in more high-paying cities with better business climates. They also found many veterans lose earning potential since the majority don’t enter certain high-paying industries such as real estate, finance and insurance.
Being a U.S. Air Force Academy graduate and Air Force veteran herself, Weinstein said she wanted to research this subject since she was in graduate school.

“The men and women that I had the opportunity to serve with in the military are highly skilled, dedicated, and hard-working,” Weinstein said. “They have a lot to offer the workforce and the data shows that.
Free Fly Fishing for Veterans Provides Serenity and Connection
Provided by Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc

On waterways across the country, warriors hardened from service and sacrifice, are feeling peace, joy and connection—often for the first time in a long time.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF) provides basic fly fishing, fly casting, fly tying and rod building classes to both Veterans who have never fly fished before, and seasoned anglers. Fishing trips, both one day and multi-day, are provided free of charge to participants; including all fly fishing and tying equipment.

PHWFF is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of injured and disabled Veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings. But, PHWFF transcends fly fishing. The organization builds relationships and fosters communities for Veterans and outdoor enthusiasts.

Using a nationwide network of over 200 programs, PHWFF programs meet regularly throughout the year with volunteers, teaching the basics and advanced techniques while building long-term relationships. The program is much more than a one-time fishing trip. The camaraderie and community developed during regular year-round classes are just as meaningful as the outings.

Over 116 VA healthcare facilities host Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing programs, allowing PHWFF to bring their unique form of therapy to an ever-expanding number of Veterans. At these locations, PHWFF volunteers are VA volunteers. They provide fly fishing, fly tying, and rod building programs and a caring community for the Veteran patients.

“Project Healing Waters is more than a fishing program,” said Marilyn Radatz, Salem VA Medical Center’s Supervisory Recreational Therapist. “The connections that our Veterans establish make a tremendous impact on their lives and within their communities. The time they spend learning to tie flies, as well as the sport of fly fishing, bring an ideal therapeutic value to
each of their lives. It is a joy to watch our Veterans build upon relationships with their fellow Veterans and guides as they venture into a safe, relaxing and meaningful leisure experience.”

Over 8,300 Veterans are currently participating in PHWFF programs throughout the United States supported by over 4,000 volunteers. Many participants have found the program so transformative that they have become volunteer leaders striving to serve their fellow Veterans through PHWFF. Over 20% of PHWFF volunteers are former participants in the program.

PHWFF is a nonprofit organization founded by Ed Nicholson, a retired Navy captain, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 2005 to bring community, camaraderie, and a unique form of therapy to those who have honorably served and sacrificed for our Nation. Since that time, the PHWFF program has expanded Nationwide, establishing its highly successful program in Department of Defense hospitals, Warrior Transition Units, and VA Medical Centers.

To join the PHWFF program in creating a strong, supportive community connected through shared experiences, camaraderie, and challenges of the rod, reel, and line, visit the PHWFF homepage or email programs@projecthealingwaters.org

PHWFF invites you to join their community of Veterans, volunteers, and military family members.
FLORIDA DEFENSE ALLIANCE

Lawyers Assisting Warriors

Governor DeSantis is committed to ensuring our service-members have the support of the state’s legal community and its best legal minds. To achieve this goal, the Governor’s Initiative on Lawyers Assisting Warriors (GI LAW) will draw from the talent of Florida’s leading law firms to provide pro bono services for military members. Through this initiative, our state’s men and women in uniform will receive local counsel in a variety of civil matters, including actions in local courts. Participating attorneys will dedicate time and expertise to ensure a prompt and fair resolution of legal matters.

This program is a collaboration between the Governor, the Department of Military Affairs, the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs and Enterprise Florida, Inc.

Request Assistance:

GI LAW Legal Assistance Request Forms must be submitted through the appropriate Judge Advocate General or civilian military attorney’s office. Request forms are not accepted directly from service members.
**Governor’s Initiative on Lawyers Assisting Warriors**

**GI LAW Legal Appointment Request**

**SERVICE MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**TYPES OF CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- Do you have any upcoming hearings, court dates, government agency interactions, or any other deadlines? Please provide time, dates and locations.

- Please provide any related legal documentation.

- Do you have current representation? Y N

  If so, please provide the representative’s contact information.

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**PRO BONO FEES AND COSTS STATEMENT:**
Pro Bono legal services provided under GI LAW are free of charge to the service member. However, there may be costs associated with such pro bono legal services that the service member may need to pay, including, but not limited to, court filing fees. The service member’s assigned attorney will discuss with the service member any anticipated potential costs in the scope of representation.

**SERVICE MEMBER INSTRUCTION:** GI LAW Legal Assistance Request Forms must be submitted through the appropriate Judge Advocate General or civilian military attorney’s office. Request forms are not accepted directly from service members. Please contact your assigned Judge Advocate General (JAG) Office or Legal Unit to apply.

**SERVICE MEMBER AUTHORIZATION:**
I, ______________________________, hereby authorize (i) GI LAW, (ii) the requesting Officer or Attorney, and (iii) GI LAW participating law firms to review and use any and all information provided pursuant to this form for all purposes consistent with the GI LAW program, including, but not limited to, determining whether the request meets pro bono prerequisites of the participating firm. I authorize the requesting Officer or Attorney to disclose and review all pertinent information relating to this referral with this participating attorney.

__________________________  ________________  ______________________
Service Member printed name  Service Member signature  Date Signed

[FOR ATTORNEY USE ONLY]

**JAG OFFICER AND CIVILIAN MILITARY ATTORNEY INSTRUCTIONS:**
Please fill out the requested necessary information for a civil assignment for pro bono legal services. The service member must also read the Pro Bono Fees and Costs Statement and sign and date the Service Member Authorization on page 2 of this request. This request should be emailed to GI LAW Executive Director, Chuck Faircloth at FairclothC@fdva.state.fl.us. Alternatively, this request may be faxed to 850-488-4001, or mailed to GI LAW at 400 South Monroe Street, Suite 2105, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001.

Please direct any questions to Mr. Faircloth at FairclothC@fdva.state.fl.us or to his Office Manager, Lillian Dupree, at DupreeL@fdva.state.fl.us, or to 850-487-1533, option 2.

**LEGAL SERVICES REQUEST INFORMATION**

JAG Officer/Attorney Name: ________________________________

JAG Officer/Attorney Contact Info: ________________________________

JAG Officer/Atty. Office Info (if different): ________________________________

JAG Officer/Attorney Request Date: ________________________________
CASE CLOSING/REPORT FORM

Date Service Requested/Received: ________________________________

Date Case Referred: ____________________________________________________________________________


Hours Donated/Est. Value: _________________________________________________________________________

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VIETNAM BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS

Disability benefits available to those serving offshore

Agent Orange Exposure in the Republic of Vietnam Waters (Blue Water Navy)

Blue Water Navy Veterans are now entitled to a presumptive of service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure. This extension of the presumption is a result of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, signed into law on June 25, 2019. The law takes effect January 1, 2020.

The law states that Veterans aboard a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia as defined in Public Law 116-23, between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides such as Agent Orange and may be entitled to service connection for conditions related to that exposure.

To be entitled to disability compensation benefits, these Veterans must have one or more of the conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure that are listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e).

What conditions are related to Agent Orange exposure?

Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:
- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne, or other acne form disease consistent with chloracne
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus, Type 2
- Ischemic heart disease
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin’s disease
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Multiple myeloma
- Parkinson’s disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma, or mesothelioma).

How do I file a claim for disability compensation?

- Apply online using www.va.gov, OR
- Work with an accredited representative or agent, OR
- Go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you. You can find your regional office on our Facility Locator page.
- State on your application that you are filing for one of the presumed Agent Orange conditions.
- Include any evidence you have of service in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the required timeframe. Include the name(s) of the ship(s) and the date(s) you crossed within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam. If you have that information.
- Provide medical evidence showing a diagnosis of a current Agent Orange presumptive condition or tell us where you are being treated.

For more information on how to apply and for tips on making sure your claim is ready to be processed by VA, visit our Disability Compensation web page. www.va.gov
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to prove contact with Agent Orange?
No. You don’t need to show that you came into contact with Agent Orange. Congress has provided that conditions on the list of presumptive diseases will be deemed to have been caused by contact with Agent Orange through service in the Republic of Vietnam, including offshore waters as defined by the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019.

What will be the effective date for benefits for Blue Water Navy Veteran claims?
Presumptive Agent Orange conditions granted for Blue Water Navy Veterans will generally be payable from the date VA received your original claim. If you had a previously denied claim and you resubmit your claim, the effective date will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

When do the Blue Water Navy presumptions go into effect?
The Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 will take effect on January 1, 2020. Veterans can file claims at any time, and they will be decided after the law is implemented. Blue Water Navy claims and appeals currently in process have been placed on hold (stayed) until the new rules go into effect.

How will the previously denied claims be handled?
If you had an Agent Orange claim with one or more presumptive conditions denied in the past, you are urged to file a new supplemental claim on VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. Provide any new and relevant information regarding your claim such as dates you believe your ship traveled within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam, or updated medical information. Claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal will be reviewed under the new policy.

If a Blue Water Navy Veteran has not applied for benefits in the past, but would like to apply now will the presumption of exposure be extended to them?
Yes, VA will apply the provisions of the law to Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans who file new claims based on presumption of exposure to Agent Orange.

What happens if the Veteran dies before his or her claim is decided?
If the claimant dies while his or her claim is pending, a living dependent, such as a spouse or child, may file a request to be substituted as the claimant.

May the surviving spouse of a Blue Water Navy Veteran who passed away from a condition related to Agent Orange exposure, and who was previously denied compensation for such condition, become entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)?
If the Veteran served on a Navy or Coast Guard ship that operated not more than 12 nautical miles from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia as defined in the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 and the cause of death was from a condition related to exposure to Agent Orange, then VA may award entitlement to DIC on that basis.

Where can I get additional information on disability compensation for Agent Orange?
Veterans with questions about benefits or filing a claim can visit the VA Agent Orange website https://www.va.gov/directory录eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/ They can also call the disability benefits call center at 800-827-1000.
**Purpose.** The purpose of the “Colonel Gary E. DeKay” Flagler County Veteran of the Year Award is to recognize a living Flagler County veteran who has not only served his/her country with honor but has used the leadership skills and abilities learned in service to the nation to better the community through selfless volunteer service to Flagler County.

**Nominations and Award.** Nominations for the Flagler County Veteran of the Year are accepted by the Flagler County Veterans Advisory Council from 1 August through 30 September of each year. The Flagler County Veterans Advisory Council commissions a panel of veterans and community leaders to review and select the Veteran of the Year from the eligible candidates. The award is presented at the Flagler County Veterans Day ceremony in November each year.

**Award Criteria.** The following criteria must be met for an individual to be considered for the Flagler County Veteran of the Year.

- Must be a resident of Flagler County, Florida.
- Must be a living veteran of one of the five Armed Forces of the United States, including Reserve or National Guard, or the United States Merchant Marine.
- Must have demonstrated outstanding patriotism, leadership, and selfless service as a veteran and as a volunteer in community or civic service.
- May be awarded for a single act or for continuous service.
- May **not** be a previous recipient of the Flagler County Veteran of the Year award.

**Nomination Procedures.** Nomination are open from August 1 to September 30 each year. Nominations must be postmarked no later than **September 30**. The nomination may **not exceed** three typewritten pages and must include as a minimum:

1. A resume not to exceed two (2) typewritten pages (minimum font of 11 pitch) which includes:
   - Period(s) of military service and branch of one of the five Armed Services or USMM
   - Military Awards and Decorations
   - Membership in nationally recognized veterans organizations
   - Community and/or civic organization memberships
   - Community and/or civic organization awards or special recognition
   - Nominees address, telephone number, and email if available.

2. A one page typewritten nomination statement that describes why the individual being nominated should be selected as the Flagler County Veteran of the Year. This should be a description of the outstanding patriotism, leadership and selfless service of the veteran as a volunteer contributor to the betterment of the County through community or civic service. (Maximum 250 words)
3. **Proof of Military service** – DD 214 or verification by a nationally recognized veteran’s organization.

4. Nominations must be mailed or personally delivered to the Flagler County Veteran’s Service Office, **ATTN: Veteran of the Year**, 1769 East Moody Boulevard, Building #2, Bunnell, Florida 32110.
August 21st • 8am - 2pm

VFW Post 8696
47 Old Kings Rd. N., Palm Coast, FL 32137

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