

August 2019
Post Newsletter
WesternSpringsVFW.org

Commander's Stuff

By Rich Jesswein

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AUGUST, the “dog days of summer” are coming to an end. As I reread some of my letters, I noticed I talk a lot about TIME. I suppose it’s because time is something we can never get back, and at times (no pun intended) it has a way of getting away from us.

At our meeting in July (if you weren’t there, may I suggest you come to our next meeting), we had a lively discussion on how much money we have in our pot and how to spend it. In last month’s letter I brought up a point of not reducing the money for the winners of “Patriots Pen” and “Voice of Democracy.” As I said, it was a lively discussion; a lot of pros and cons were brought up. I did not get what I wanted, but we compromised, and came up with a satisfactory agreement for all of us.

AND, isn’t that what we fought for?? Democracy, compromise and getting an agreement we can all work with? Why can’t our government do the same? I’m sorry, I’m getting political, and I don’t want to go there.

Talking about politics, not talking about politics (I’m so confused) we had a woman, Marie Newman, who is

Save the Dates

Aug. 8th – Hospital Visit
Aug. 13th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church
Aug. 16th – Deadline for September newsletter
Sept. 10th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting** at Grace Lutheran Church

running for Congress, talk to us at our last meeting. It was a “political free” discussion. She got a lot of input on what is important to veterans.

I’m “rehabbing” a lot of what happened at our July meeting. We voted to give Fisher House at Hines Hospital \$2,000 for their needs. They will let us know what their needs are. We also talked about getting new bingo cards for the Thursday bingo games.

Some important dates in August are:

- Aug. 4 - US Coast Guard Birthday
- Aug. 14 - Victory over Japan Day

KNOW YOUR HISTORY: What President in 1818 called for our flag to have 13 stripes and 1 star for each state? Answer at the end of this letter.

Once again, I've rambled on for too long, sooooooooooooooooooooo

*Roses are Red
Violets are Blue
Remember to be "Bright and Chipper"
It's all up to you*

Till next month, CHOI

Answer: James Monroe

Quartermaster Report

By Mike Winner

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Statement of funds as of 7/9/19:

Post General Fund	\$10,320.16
Post Relief Fund	8,187.69
TOTAL:	\$18,507.85

Poppy Donation total for 2019 was \$8,288. That is \$700 more than last year. Danny Legan, Val Price and Tom Higgins led the pack with \$870, \$770, and \$750 collected respectively. Parade Donations totaled: \$2,775. After parade expenses, we netted over \$1,500. Our annual dinner actually made \$10. We can continue to support the Children's Home and Hine's Hospital as we have in years past. Great job to those that made this happen!

Semper Fidelis!

Hospital Chairman Report

By Walt Bergenthal

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Thanks to the many Poppy Days collectors, on July 11 your Post was able to donate \$2,000 to the Hines Fisher House for its upkeep. Again, veterans helping veterans and their families.

Back to School Fun

In honor of kids going back to school this month, here's some fun trivia.

Q: How many states are there?

A: 50 states

Q: In which hand is the Statue of Liberty's torch?

A: Right hand

Q: On our flag, is the top stripe white or red?

A: Red

Q: Does a merry-go-round turn clockwise or counterclockwise?

A: Counterclockwise

Q: How many curves are in a standard paperclip?

A: 3

Q: Does water go down the drain clockwise or counterclockwise?

A: Actually, it depends on the plumbing fixture. The notion that the water direction varies with the hemisphere you are in has been disproved!

Q: What six colors are on the classic Campbell soup label?

A: Blue, red, white, yellow, black, and gold

Q: Whose face is on a dime?

A: Roosevelt

Q: What's in the center on the back of a dollar bill?

A: ONE

Source: Teachers First

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 5, 2019

VA extends Agent Orange presumption to ‘Blue Water Navy’ Veterans *Eligible Veterans may now be entitled to disability compensation benefits*

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).

For more information about Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam waters (Blue Water Navy Veterans), visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/vietnam-waters/>. The updated web links will be live at 4 p.m. EST. Please disregard the content prior to the update.

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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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 presumption 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 acneform 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 the effective date for Benefits be for Blue Water Navy Veteran claims?

Presumptive Agent Orange conditions granted for Blue Water Navy Veterans may be retroactive to 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. 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.

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 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 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 www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/. They can also call the disability benefits call center at 800-827-1000.

