



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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County Executive

PETER K. GOEBEL
Director

Vol. 14, Issue 5
Sept./Oct. 2019

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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?

• 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. (Navy Deck Logs: The National Archives has digitized a sizable number of deck logs for Navy ships; they are available on this site: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/logbooks/navy-online> and Carrier Reports: The Blue Water Navy Association prepared a series of very useful reports presenting information on when Aircraft Carriers entered the territorial seas off Vietnam within the required 12 nautical miles of the baseline; they are available on this site. These reports provide you with the page number of the ship's Deck Log where the information about the ship entering the territorial seas can be verified.

• Provide medical evidence showing a diagnosis of a current Agent Orange presumptive condition or tell us where you are being treated.

***PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST HAVE EVIDENCE OF SERVICE IN THE OFFSHORE WATERS AND BE DIAGNOSED WITH AN AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVE CONDITION. (Continued Page 2)**

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the Albany VA Medical Center ?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the Albany VAMC for most morning medical appointments.

For more details call:
270-2760.



VETERANS CRISIS LINE

1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255
TTY service 1-800-799-4889

Confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, for veterans and their loved ones.

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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 or the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency at (518) 270-2760.

RETURN THE F.A.V.O.R.
VETERAN DISCOUNT PROGRAM

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Eligibility for the Rensselaer County Veterans' Discount Program is for Veterans or the widows/widowers of Veterans.

Eligibility for a Veterans ID Card is dependent on being an honorably discharged Veteran of the United States Military.

The Veteran or widow/widower **MUST** apply for the card in person.

Receipt of the Veterans FAVOR card is dependent on the Veteran or widow/widower's filing of an original Discharge (DD-214 / Report of Separation) at the Rensselaer County Clerk's Office.

WHERE DO I APPLY?

Rensselaer County Clerk's Office
105 Third Street
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 270-4080

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED
A SALUTE TO VETERANS



21ST ANNUAL VETERANS BREAKFAST
Sunday, November 10, 2019 8:30 am– 11:30 am
Noontime Medal Presentation Ceremony



Free to all Veterans & Immediate Family Members at the
Melvin Roads American Legion Post #1231, 200 Columbia Tpk., Rensselaer, New York

Sponsored by County Executive Steven F. McLaughlin and the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency

For more information on how to purchase an ad in our booklet or to donate, please call (518) 270-2760

A Message From the Veterans Service Agency Director

As the weather begins to cool down, enjoy our last remaining weeks of warm weather. After the Schaghticoke Fair, it will soon be time for our Veterans Day activities. Pencil in the date of 10 November for the 21st Annual County Veterans Breakfast.

I encourage all Veterans to join all the Posts which they are eligible for. Our cumulative efforts will pay off to help those Veterans who are not as well off as others. Join to help other Veterans and yourselves.

All Veterans should have their DD-214's or discharge documents registered at the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency and/or the Rensselaer County Clerk's Office. Honorably Discharged Veterans can get their Return the F.A.V.O.R. Card at the County Clerk's Office at 105 Third Street, Troy, New York, when they file their DD-214's. If you or your family ever need your DD-214, you will then have it on file in our office, if you filed it with us. If you don't file it with our office or the County Clerks Office, then neither office will have it on file. Don't be caught without it. Fill out the Pre-Need Burial Form (VA Form 40-10007), if you want to be buried at Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery.

Everyone at your Posts and every Veteran out there should know at least one Veteran that the Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Committee can remember in the monthly poignant ceremony and each Post should also contact the Rensselaer County Legislature to honor our living Veterans at (518) 270-2880 or email: Renscoleg@rensco.com.

Enjoy your autumn and do all that you can to help our Veterans. Join us to preserve the rights of Veterans that others are trying to take away and join us to support each other as only we can.

I hope to see everyone at the Great Schaghticoke Fair.

Yours in Patriotism,
Peter K. Gaebel



HONOR-A-DECEASED VETERAN CEREMONY

Every second Monday of the month, Rensselaer County honors a deceased veteran in a very moving and respectful ceremony in the County Legislative Chambers.

If you have a loved one who was a veteran from Rensselaer County and would like to have them honored, please contact the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency at 270-2760 for an application.

The following criteria applies to the honorees:

- Must have personal tie to Rensselaer County (born, raised, or resided in);
- Must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and discharge must accompany application;
- Copy of obituary must accompany application;
- May only be honored once;
- Submitted applications must be legible and have a family contact (name, address and telephone number);
- List of all medals, campaigns, and battles;
- Include civilian history (all community services and organizations);
- Be as detailed as possible, the entire ceremony is dedicated to this one particular veteran and it is their life story;
- Completed applications and supporting info must be turned into:

Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency, 1600 Seventh Avenue, Troy, New York 12180

For an application , please call us at 518-270-2760 or download an application at www.rensco.com



2019 CAPITAL REGION HOMELESS VETERAN'S STAND DOWN



**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2019
7AM-1PM**

At the Schenectady Armory, 125 Washington Avenue, Schenectady, NY

Albany (518) 447-7710
Fulton (518) 736-5651
Montgomery (518) 853-8152
Saratoga (518) 884-4115
Warren (518) 761-6342

Columbia (518) 828-3610
Greene (518) 943-3703
Rensselaer (518) 270-2760
Schenectady (518) 377-2423
Washington (518) 746-2470

Saturday Only Number (518) 389-8399



Upcoming Events:

*Call us at (518) 270-2760 to have
your event listed in the newsletter.*

September 2nd... **LABOR DAY—OFFICE CLOSED**

September 9th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

Andrew (Andy) Dolan- US Navy, S/1c-WWII; USA, SFC-Korea & Vietnam; and Gloria L. (Steeves) Dolan- USA, SP3-KWE

September 12th...61st Annual Uncle Sam Graveside Ceremony at Uncle Sam's gravesite in Oakwood Cemetery @ 6pm. Info 518-221-3428

October 5th...Capital Region Stand-Down at the Schenectady Armory, 125 Washington Ave., Schenectady, from 8am –1pm

October 14th...**COLUMBUS DAY—OFFICE CLOSED**

October 15th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

William A. Nedoroscik—USN, FN & USMC, Pvt.-Vietnam

November 5th...**ELECTION DAY—OFFICE CLOSED**

November 10th...21st Annual Veterans Breakfast at Melvin Roads A.L. Post from 8:30am-11:30am, more info call 518-270-2760