

## **1<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT SERVICE OFFICER VA & R REPORT FOR MAY 24**



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### **VA NEWS & INFORMATION:**

Did you know if you were stationed at Parris Island in the 1900s and you have developed myelodysplastic syndrome, multiple myeloma, and aplastic anemia, you may be eligible for disability compensation?

There are discussions underway to expand the PACT Act, with politicians advocating for minor adjustments to better support veterans. This proposed measure aims to increase disability compensation and broaden access to health care services for a larger group of veterans. Additionally, there are plans to establish a toxic exposure fund that will contribute towards the health care expansions.

Did you know Reserve retirement uses the same broad principles as the Active Duty system, but instead of basing retirement pay on years of service, Reserve retirement is determined using Retirement Points? A qualifying year is a complete year in which a service member has earned a minimum of 50 retirement points.

Did you know that payment for healthcare at the VA is a crucial aspect that varies among individual veterans. While some veterans are required to pay for their healthcare services, there are also cases where certain veterans are exempt from such payments. The determining factor for whether a veteran needs to pay for healthcare at the VA is contingent upon a specific criterion. All veterans are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the payment policies to ensure smooth access to the healthcare services they deserve.

Did you know the VA does not have a specific diagnostic code and corollary rating schedule for constrictive bronchiolitis? Therefore, the majority of veterans with constrictive bronchiolitis receive a zero disability rating, and are not awarded disability compensation.

Did you know disability claims denials often stem from inadequate evidence linking your condition to service, insufficient medical documentation, missed filing deadlines, and technical errors such as submitting the wrong form, filling out forms incorrectly, or using outdated versions, can lead to claim denials?

Did you know the latest findings from new research sheds light on the potential long-term health risks faced by veterans who were exposed to particulate matter that formed in their lungs during their service overseas? The study underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the health implications for troops who served overseas.

Did you know veterans can obtain a free copy of their military records through their local Veterans Service Office as well as their DD Form 214 at their local County Recorder's Office at no charge? The DD Form 214 is essential for veterans to access their benefits such as VA loans, disability compensation and reduced medical costs.

Did you know the VA and the Treasury recently announced that veterans who receive compensation and pension benefits and do not file federal tax returns will automatically receive their stimulus checks and will no longer be required to file the simple tax return through the IRS' online tool? There should be no interruption in payment for those veterans who have already filed a simple tax return using that tool.

Did you know veterans, and active duty service members in the U.S. may be able to have their commissary groceries delivered right to their front door this summer? Home deliveries, set to begin in late summer, are planned as an expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic-era accessibility program and would be provided within a 20-mile radius of commissaries at bases in the continental U.S

Presumptive Conditions: If you were in the areas below, you were exposed to Agent Orange.

Vietnam – 1/9/1962 to 5/7/1975 in-country Vietnam, inland waterways, and Territorial Waters within 12 nautical miles. Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea used between the dates of 4/1/1968 to 8/31/1971.

Any U.S. or Royal Thai Bases in Thailand 1/9/62 to 6/30/76, Laos 12/1/65 to 9/30/69, Cambodia at Mimot, Krek, Kamont Cham Province 4/16/69 to 4/30/69, Guam and American Samoa and territorial waters 1/9/62 to 7/30/80. Johnston Atoll or ship harbored at Johnston Atoll 1/1/72 to 9/30/77.

Thailand - Air Force veterans on Royal Thai Air Force bases at U-Tapao, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Udorn, Takhli, Korat, and Don Muang, near the air base perimeter – 2/28/1961 and 5/7/1975. U.S. Army Veterans on these bases or on some small installations performing perimeter security or Military Police duties – 2/28/1961 and 5/7/1975.

Surviving Spouses can apply if the veteran died from one of the diseases caused by Agent Orange.

Over 54 presumptive conditions and cancers with Agent Orange exposure; Hypertension, Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (MGUS), Diabetes Type II, Heart Disease, Parkinson's, Hypothyroidism, Bladder Cancer, Prostate Cancer, secondary conditions and more.



**Remember..... That all gave some, but many gave all!**