

1ST DISTRICT SERVICE OFFICER VA & R REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 24



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VA NEWS & INFORMATION:

Military veterans across the country are suffering from illnesses caused by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), to which they were exposed while serving at an Army facility. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not treat diseases linked to PFAS as a presumptively service-related disability. The VET PFAS Act, if voted to become law, could ease the situation of veterans who fell victim to PFAS. The act, introduced in July 2023, would ensure veterans and their families are compensated for PFAS-related health conditions.

Did you know the Foreign Medical Program (FMP) provides a lifeline for veterans with service-connected disabilities living or traveling abroad? Under the FMP, qualified veterans can receive coverage for medical conditions recognized by the VA as service-connected. This program is crucial for veterans residing or spending significant time outside of the United States, where accessing U.S. healthcare services is not an option. The FMP covers a range of medical needs, including prescriptions and treatments for physical and mental health conditions linked to veterans' military service.

According to recent reports, Agent Orange was just one of several chemicals used in secret missions in the jungles of Vietnam. Other chemicals, such as Agent Black, Agent White, and Agent Purple, were also used, but their long-term effects on human health are not yet fully understood. It's estimated that tens of thousands of gallons of these chemicals were used during the war, potentially exposing countless soldiers to dangerous levels.

Did you know the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States and more than 90 percent of melanoma cases in the United States are attributed to skin cell damage from ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure?

Did you know many VA Dermatology Clinics offer Veterans specialized treatments for acute (short-term) and chronic (long-lasting) skin conditions, like acne, alopecia (hair loss), psoriasis, eczema, warts, and fungal illnesses? The clinic also offers evaluation, biopsy, and treatment of cancerous or pre-cancerous skin conditions, including basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma.: outpatient biopsies, state of the art phototherapy treatment, a home photo-therapy unit, if unable to come in person for treatment and the latest technology in laser treatments. To increase accessibility for Veterans, the clinic also offers telehealth appointments to meet with medical professionals virtually.

Did you know one of the most common skin disorders that affects veterans is psoriasis? This chronic autoimmune condition can cause red, scaly patches on the skin that can be itchy and painful. Psoriasis can also lead to joint pain, which can make it difficult for veterans to perform everyday tasks. Another common skin disorder that affects veterans is eczema, which can cause dry, itchy, and inflamed skin. This can be particularly problematic for veterans who may be exposed to environmental irritants during their service.

Did you know in 2025, veterans will need to start using a Login.gov or ID.me account to sign in to VA websites and apps, including My HealtheVet? The time is now! Veterans are encouraged to create a Login.gov or ID.me account asap. If you already have one of these accounts but haven't yet used it, start now so you have time to

get used to it before the change. With Login.gov or ID.me, you'll have access to all the same information and services you use today.

Arteriosclerosis obliterans, also known as peripheral artery disease (PAD), is a condition that affects the arteries, particularly those in the legs. It can lead to reduced blood flow, causing symptoms like leg pain, cramping, and weakness during physical activity. This condition is crucial for veterans to be aware of, as it can impact mobility and quality of life.

Vietnam veterans with illnesses that they believe were incurred or aggravated by exposure to Agent Orange or other aspects of military service – are encouraged to contact a VA veterans services representative at the nearest VA Regional Office or health care facility and apply for disability compensation. The counselors have information about the wide range of benefit programs administered by VA. The national toll-free number is 1-800-827-1000. Vietnam veterans seeking disability compensation for illnesses incurred in or aggravated by military service also may wish to call VA's Special Issues Helpline at 1-800-PGW-VETS (1-800-749-8387). Also, reach out to your nearest Veterans Service Organization for help.

Did you know there are generally four types of PTSD symptoms? They are: Reliving the event (re-experiencing). You may feel like you are going through the event again. This is called a flashback. You may see, hear, or smell something that causes you to relive the event. This is called a trauma reminder, cue, or trigger. News reports, war movies, seeing an accident, or hearing emergency vehicles are examples of trauma reminders.

Did you know the state of Wisconsin has additional benefits available through the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Military Funeral Honors Program (MFHP) specifically for military funerals? The program works to provide and coordinate a final tribute to the men and women who served Wisconsin and nation honorably as members of the U.S. armed forces. It allows a grateful nation to pay its last respects in a dignified and solemn ceremony.

Did you know once the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) grants a service connection for a disability and it has been in place for at least ten years, the VA cannot terminate this connection unless there is evidence of fraud? This ten-year period begins from the effective date of the original service connection grant.

Did you know for veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange during their military service, there may be a connection between that exposure and the need for a pacemaker later in life? Certain heart conditions, including heart block, have been linked to Agent Orange exposure. Heart block is a type of abnormal heart rhythm that can require the implantation of a pacemaker to regulate the heartbeat.

Asbestos lung cancer compensation may be available to veterans and their loved ones, providing financial relief after a difficult diagnosis. This money comes from the companies that made or sold the asbestos-containing products a patient was exposed to.



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