



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

CLAIMS INTAKE CENTER
PO BOX 4444
JANESVILLE WI 53547-4444

October 23, 2019



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You May Qualify for Disability Benefits

Dear

Due to a recent law change, you may be eligible for VA benefits.

Why We Are Contacting You

The new law (Public Law 116-23¹, *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019*):

- extends presumption of herbicide exposure to service within the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam, and
- provides a potential earlier effective date for conditions that were previously denied service connection.

How This May Affect You

You were previously denied service-connected benefits for an herbicide-related disability, and you may now be eligible. You may also be eligible for a potential retroactive effective date if VA grants service-connected benefits under the new law for an herbicide-related disability you previously claimed on or after September 25, 1985, and before January 1, 2020, that was subsequently denied.

VA is currently processing claims and will decide these claims based on the date of the new law. This means eligible Veterans will be awarded benefits as early as January 1, 2020.

Eligibility Criteria

You may apply for benefits if you believe the following criteria are met:

1. You served aboard a US Navy or Coast Guard ship on the offshore "blue waters" of the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, VA will presume herbicide exposure if your service included:
 - Duty or visitation within the Republic of Vietnam itself, or
 - Travel on a vessel in the inland waterways of the Republic of Vietnam, or
 - Travel on a vessel within the eligible offshore waters as listed in Public Law 116-23.
2. You can provide us with evidence or identify any evidence that we can gather on your behalf, such as a diagnosis or treatment for one or more of the conditions noted in 38 C.F.R § 3.309(e), listed below:
 - Amyloid light-chain (AL) amyloidosis
 - Chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne
 - Parkinson's disease
 - Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
 - Porphyria cutanea tarda

¹PL 116-23, *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019*, can be accessed online at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/299/text>.

- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus type 2
- Ischemic heart disease
- Lymphoma, Hodgkin's
- Lymphoma, Non-Hodgkin's
- Multiple myeloma
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

What We Need from You

If you feel you meet the eligibility criteria:

1. Submit the enclosed **VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim**.
2. Submit any evidence relevant to the circumstances of your Vietnam service such as the vessel on which you served, the dates of your service on that vessel, and dates of duty or visitation within the Republic of Vietnam or within the offshore waters as listed in Public Law 116-23.
3. Submit or tell us or consult with your Veterans Service Organization (VSO) about any evidence, such as treatment for one or more of the conditions referenced above, that VA can assist you in gathering in support of your claim.

Please note, if you do not submit a completed VA Form 20-0995, VA will not take any action to review your claim.

If You Want to File a New Claim

If you want to file a claim for a new herbicide-related disability (that has not been previously decided by VA), please do not use or submit **VA Form 20-0995**. Please go to **www.va.gov** to initiate your new claim.

Please note, submission of VA Form 20-0995 is not currently available on VA.gov.

If You Have Questions or Need Assistance

VA Website	www.va.gov/
VA Forms Website	www.va.gov/vaforms
VA Agent Orange Website	https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/
Frequently Asked Questions	https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/app/answers/list
Submit a Question*	https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/app/ask
Mailing Address*	Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Intake Center PO Box 4444 Janesville, WI 53547-4444
Fax Numbers*	(844) 655-1604 (inside the U.S.) (248) 524-4260 (outside the U.S.)
Toll Free Number	1-800-749-8387, Option 2
TTY, Federal Relay	711
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 and press 1
VA Regional Office Location	www.va.gov/find-locations

****Please include your full name and VA file number with your question; on the inside of mailed correspondence (not on the envelope); or on the fax coversheet.***

VA Support VA Support VA Support
You may wish to contact an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO) to assist you with your application. For a list of accredited Veterans Service Organizations go to <https://www.va.gov/vso/>. You may also contact your state office of veterans affairs at <https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>, should you need further assistance with the application process.

Thank you for your service to our country and for allowing us to serve you.

Sincerely,

Beth Murphy
Executive Director, Compensation Service
Veterans Benefits Administration

Enclosure: VA Form 20-0995