



# Veterans of the Vietnam War

P.O. Box 2113, Middletown, Connecticut 06457-2113



## "PEOPLE WHO CARE"

Volume 25, Issue 12

NEWSLETTER

October 2010

### **25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHAPTER**

#### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR** **October MEETING**

**Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. @ the Legion Hall.**

This Month's Meeting is on **Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.** at the American Legion Hall in Middletown. (Bernie O'Rourke Drive)

#### **REST OF THE YEAR SCHEDULE**

##### **2010**

**October meeting, October 5th**  
November meeting, November 2nd  
**November D.C. Trip, November 5 - 7**  
December meeting, December 7th  
December BELL RINGING Salvation Army **TBD**  
**December Christmas Party / 25th Anniversary -**  
**Date & Place to be discussed at Oct meeting**  
**Off Site Location suggested for the party.**

#### **WASHINGTON D. C. TRIP**

**Payment is due in full by October 1, 2010.**

Payment for the D.C. trip has to be in by Oct. 1st in order to confirm the Hotel rooms and the Bus for our trip. **Please contact Jack at 860-347-8843 if you can't meet the October 1st. date.** We need everyone's cooperation in this to prevent any problems and to make the trip run smoothly.

#### **DUES**

Dues are payable at the beginning of the year. \$12.00 per year or \$100.00 for life membership.

Make Checks out to:  
**VVW MIDDLETOWN**

Mail Checks to:  
**VVW MIDDLETOWN**  
P.O. Box 2113  
Middletown, CT. 06457-2113

On January 1, 2011, members who haven't yet renewed become "delinquent" and further, if they haven't renewed by February 1, 2011, are no longer members "in good standing".

Please renew your membership by paying your DUES as soon as possible.

#### **DRAWING**

The name drawn at the September meeting was Pete DeRita Sr. who would have won \$50.00 if he was able to attend the meeting.

The drawing pot will increase another \$10.00 for someone attending the October meeting and having their name drawn.



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Now that the Fall season is approaching, Vinnie Labbadia has installed his new Fire Pit in his back yard.

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**VA Presumptive VN Vet Diseases Update:** Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a final regulation published on 31 AUG 2010 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions. "Last October, based on the requirements of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 and the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Update on Agent Orange, I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to award presumptions of service connection for these three additional diseases," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "It was the right decision, and the President and I are proud to finally provide this group of Veterans the care and benefits they have long deserved." The final regulation follows Shinseki's determination to expand the list of conditions for which service connection for Vietnam Veterans is presumed. VA is adding Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease and expanding chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B cell leukemia's, such as hairy cell leukemia.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their medical problems and their military service. By helping Veterans overcome evidentiary requirements that might otherwise present significant challenges, this "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process and ensure that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

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The Secretary's decision to add these presumptives is based on the latest evidence provided in a 2008 independent study by the Institute of Medicine concerning health problems caused by herbicides like Agent Orange. Veterans who served in Vietnam anytime during the period beginning 9 JAN 62, and ending on 7 MAY 75, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides. More than 150,000 Veterans are expected to submit Agent Orange claims in the next 12 to 18 months, many of whom are potentially eligible for retroactive disability payments based on past claims. Additionally, VA will review approximately 90,000 previously denied claims by Vietnam Veterans for service connection for these conditions. All those awarded service-connection who are not currently eligible for enrollment into the VA healthcare system will become eligible.

This historic regulation is subject to provisions of the Congressional Review Act that require a 60-day Congressional review period before implementation. After the review period, VA can begin paying benefits for new claims and may award benefits retroactively for earlier periods. For new claims, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the effective date of the regulation or to one year before the date VA receives the application, whichever is later. For pending claims and claims that were previously denied, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the date it received the claim. VA encourages Vietnam Veterans with these three diseases to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation now so the agency can begin development of their claims. Individuals can go to <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> to get an understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits. Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange). The new Agent Orange regulation is available on the Office of the Federal Register website at <http://www.ofr.gov/>.

**VA Blue Water Claims:** Veterans who served on open sea ships off the shore of Vietnam during the Vietnam War are sometimes called —Blue Water Veterans. In JAN 09 the Supreme Court effectively let stand an earlier court ruling that requires a Veteran to have served on land or on the inland waterways of Vietnam in order to be presumed exposed to Agent Orange. Some ships offshore also conducted operations on the inland waterways of Vietnam. Veterans are presumed exposed to Agent Orange if they served aboard

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these ships when the ships were on the inland waterways of Vietnam anytime between 9 JAN 62 and 7 MAY 75. If not, Blue Water Veterans must show on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides during military service in order to receive disability compensation for diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure. For help confirming service on the inland waterways of Vietnam or exposure to herbicides contact the nearest VA regional office, call 1(800) 827-1000, or if you are hearing impaired call 1(800) 829-4833. VA has asked the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (IOM) to review the medical and scientific evidence regarding Blue Water Veterans' possible exposure to Agent Orange. A report should be completed and available by summer 2011. IOM is evaluating:

- Historical background of the Vietnam War comparing Blue Water Navy, —boots on ground combat troops, and Brown Water Navy (includes inland waters).
- Exposure levels among Blue Water Navy relative to ground troops in Vietnam or other contemporaneous ground troops deployed elsewhere (—era Veterans).
- Comparative exposures for troops on the ground and troops aboard ships in the context of all possible routes of exposure, including herbicide —overspray, and consumption of contaminated water and food.
- A wide range of potential herbicide and dioxin exposure mechanisms including potential concentrating toxics in drinking water; air exposure possibly from drift from spraying; food; soil; skin, etc.
- Comparative risks for long-term health outcomes comparing Vietnam Veteran ground troops, Blue Water Navy Veterans, and other —Era Veterans serving during the Vietnam War at other locations (assuming relative herbicide and dioxin exposures can be assessed). This will be based on previous IOM Veterans and Agent Orange study conclusions on long-term health outcomes from herbicide exposure.
- Existing studies of Blue Water Navy Veterans for reported health outcomes.

#### **VA Benefits for eligible Blue Water Veterans include:**

- Health care benefits: VA health care benefits are open to all Veterans. In order to receive health care benefits for diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, Veterans who did not serve in Vietnam must show that they were exposed to herbicides during military service.
- Agent Orange registry health examination: A cost-free, comprehensive examination for eligible Veterans. Blue Water Veterans who served aboard ships that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam are eligible.
- Disability compensation benefits: A monthly payment for eligible Veterans who have diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure. Blue Water Veterans who did not serve aboard ships that operated on the inland

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waterways of Vietnam must show on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides during military service in order to receive disability compensation for diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure.

□ Other non-health care benefits: Home loans, vocational rehabilitation, education, and more.

**Arlington National Cemetery Update:** Veterans groups and members of Congress are questioning whether management of Arlington National Cemetery should be transferred from the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The discussions come after investigators found dozens of unmarked or mislabeled graves, millions of dollars wasted on technology contracts and mismanagement that stretched from the cemetery's leadership to the upper echelons of Army leadership in the Pentagon. "Let's let the experts take over," said Joe Davis, a spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Running cemeteries "is a primary task of the VA, whereas the Army's primary task is to fight and win our wars." The American Legion has also called for the VA to be more involved at Arlington, the nation's busiest military cemetery, which has an average of 27 funerals a day and 4 million visitors annually. And several members of Congress, including Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, have asked whether the VA, which manages 131 cemeteries nationwide with 3 million graves, would be better suited to operate Arlington.

The VFW called the VA "a recognized expert in the maintenance and operation of national cemeteries." In a statement, the American Legion said it was heartened to hear that the Army has appointed a top VA cemetery official as interim superintendent of Arlington. If the VA "can fix the problems at Arlington, then that option should be on the table," said Paul Rieckhoff, the founder and executive director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. VA officials would not comment in the absence of a formal request to transfer authority over the cemetery. But since the scandal broke, the department has been lending its expertise, and staff, to help the cemetery remedy its problems. When asked at a recent congressional hearing led by Skelton whether the VA should take over, he said it is the Army's "responsibility to carry those fallen heroes, particularly in time of war, to their final resting place." McHugh said the department did not want to "burden others because of the shortcomings of the United States Army." Through a spokeswoman, Skelton said that the committee "respects the Army's connection to the cemetery and is inclined to support its desire to remain in control, but we will continue to exercise full oversight to ensure that they live up to the high standard that is expected of them."

**These past few articles may look like repeats. They are previous articles that I have placed in the newsletter and now have the latest updates.**



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**OCTOBER 5th IS MEETING NIGHT**

**Date & Location will be discussed for having the Christmas/ 25th Anniversary Party for the Chapter.**

**Commander Larry has stated that this meeting we will be having our September Pizza night.  
(you had to be there to understand this)**

**ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND, BRING A NEW MEMBER TO JOIN US**



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**MAIL TO:**

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