



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

March 2021

Agent Orange Exposure and VA Disability Compensation

Agent Orange was a tactical herbicide the U.S. military used to clear leaves and vegetation for military operations mainly during the Vietnam War. Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange may have certain related illnesses.

You may be eligible for VA disability benefits if you meet both of the requirements listed below. Both of these must be true. You:

- Have an illness that's caused by exposure to Agent Orange, and
- Served in a location that exposed you to Agent Orange.

We determine eligibility based on the facts of each Veteran's claim. But we assume that certain cancers and other illnesses are caused by Agent Orange. We call these presumptive diseases. And we assume that Veterans who served in certain locations were exposed to Agent Orange. We refer to this as presumptive exposure.

Following are the presumptive cancers caused by Agent Orange exposure:

- Chronic B-cell leukemia
- Hodgkin's disease
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (including lung cancer)
- Some soft tissue sarcomas
- Bladder Cancer

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“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”

- Calvin Coolidge

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Following are other presumptive illnesses caused by Agent Orange:

- AL Amyloidosis
- Chloracne (or other types of acneiform disease like it)
- Diabetes mellitus type 2
- Ischemic heart disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Parkinsonism
- Peripheral neuropathy, early onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Hypothyroidism

If you have an illness that's not on our list of presumptive diseases, but you believe it was caused by Agent Orange exposure, you can still file a claim for VA disability benefits. But you'll need to submit more evidence.

We base eligibility for VA disability compensation benefits, in part, on whether you served in a location that exposed you to Agent Orange. You have a presumption of exposure if you meet at least one of the service requirements listed below. Between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 you must have served for any length of time in at least one of these locations:

- In the Republic of Vietnam, **or**
- Aboard a U.S. military vessel that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam, **or**
- On a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, **or**
- On regular perimeter duty on the fenced-in perimeters of a U.S. Army installation in Thailand or a Royal Thai Air Force base. These bases include U-Tapao, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Udon, Takhli, Korat, or Don Muang.

Or at least one of these must be true. You:

- Served in or near the Korean DMZ for any length of time between September 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971 **or**
- Served on active duty in a regular Air Force unit location where a C-123 aircraft with traces of Agent Orange was assigned, and had repeated contact with this aircraft due to your flight, ground, or medical duties, **or**
- Were involved in transporting, testing, storing, or other uses of Agent Orange during your military service **or**
- Were Assigned as a Reservist to certain flight, ground, or medical crew duties at one of the following locations:
 - Lockbourne/Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Ohio, 1969 to 1986
 - Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts, 1972 to 1982
 - Pittsburgh International Airport in Pennsylvania, 1972 to 1982

If you would like to file an Agent Orange related disability claim please contact our office to schedule an appointment with one of our Benefit Specialists.



NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY

National Vietnam War Veterans Day 2021

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is observed every year on March 29 and is a way to thank and honor our nation's Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice.

The Vietnam War Commemoration honors U.S. Armed Forces personnel with active duty service between November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location of service which includes:

- Nine million Americans serving during that time
- 6.4 million Americans living today
- 2.7 million U.S. service members who served in Vietnam
- 58,000 whose names are memorialized on a black granite wall in our Nation's capital
- 304,000 who were wounded
- 1,253 Missing in Action (MIA) heroes who have not yet returned to American soil
- 2,500 Prisoners of War (POWs)

The commemoration makes no distinction between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years.

Visit official DoD site VietnamWar50th.com for a full schedule of local events, resources and history. Fly the US flag in honor of those who served as a way to thank them.

Tax Prep Help to Veterans, Military and Families

As we inch closer to the April 15 tax deadline, AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide is among the programs aimed at helping the Military community and others file their state and federal tax returns. Tax-Aide is free and available (appointment only) to all Veterans, military personnel and their families regardless of age or whether they are AARP members.

The nationwide tax help program is geared toward people 50 and older or those who have low to moderate incomes, but Tax-Aide is open to anyone free of charge. AARP membership isn't required to take advantage of Tax-Aide's knowledgeable volunteers, nor will there be any sales pitch for other services. If you'd like to look for an appointment to receive tax filing assistance from AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide, [click here to get started](#).

Due to the pandemic, Tax-Aide availability is limited this year. Other programs offering [free tax help](#) include Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), IRS Free File and MilTax. In addition, here is some helpful information specifically for military Veterans from CPA and tax expert Lisa Greene-Lewis of Turbo Tax. See the rest of her tax advice for military Veterans on [aarp.org here](#).

VA payments exempt from federal taxes:

- VA education benefit payments.
- VA disability payments.
- Interest from VA life insurance policies.
- Benefits under a dependent-care assistance program.
- Money paid to a survivor of a member of the armed forces who died after Sept. 10, 2001.
- Payments made under the compensated work therapy program.
- Any bonus pay from a state, county, city or town because of service in a combat zone.

Fast facts on state taxes:

- States typically offer tax benefits only to Veterans who were honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstance from active duty.
- State benefits usually include some form of exemptions on property taxes, according to value. In WI, to be eligible, you must have been a resident for 5 consecutive years after entering active duty or were a WI resident when entering active duty and have a service connected disability rating of 100% or a 100% disability rating based on individual unemployment.
- Benefits are often transferred over to a spouse or surviving spouse of honorably discharged Veterans.
- Many states include additional benefits for Veterans who are disabled.
- Every state's revenue website outlines state benefits for Veterans and how to apply for them.

Wisconsin Individual Income Tax Exemptions for Veterans:

- Combat Pay Exemption - Military pay that is exempt from federal taxation, such as combat pay or hazardous duty pay, is also exempt from WI state taxation. For additional information see WI Dept of Revenue [Fact Sheet 1118](#).
- Death Gratuity Exemption - The death gratuity paid to the surviving dependent in the event of a line of duty death of a military service member is exempt from WI individual income taxes.
- Military Retirement Benefits Exemption - See the Dept of Revenue's webpage on [Individual Income Tax for Retired Persons](#).
- Mobilized Reserve/Guard Pay Exemption - The military pay must have been received from the federal government after being called into active federal service. The pay must have been for a period of time the member was on active duty.

Upcoming Events

FREE FOOD OPTIONS FOR THE OSHKOSH COMMUNITY

FARMERS TO FAMILIES FOOD BOX
OSHKOSH AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT FOOD DISTRIBUTION

When: Wednesday, February 24
 4:30 - 6:30 pm
Where: Oshkosh West High School
 375 N Eagle Street, Oshkosh

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 4:30 - 6:30 pm
Where: Oshkosh West High School
 375 N Eagle Street, Oshkosh

NEW TIME IN MARCH
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Wednesdays,
 March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
 5:00 - 6:30 pm (do not arrive before 4:30 pm)
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The USDA is partnering with farmers, distributors and nonprofits to ensure that everyone has access to the fresh produce, meat and dairy they need during the COVID-19 crisis. Receive your food box at the Oshkosh drive-thru distribution. First come, first served basis.

Meals are free to any child age 18 and under. Children do not need to be Oshkosh Area School District students or enrolled in school to receive meals.

Each child will receive 5 days worth of meals along with milk. Children do not need to be present to receive meals - a parent/guardian or sibling may pick up meals for the child.

Each party accepting a box is certifying that they are food insecure, lack money or other resources, and are in need of the Farmers to Families Food Boxes for their household use.

FEEDING AMERICA
 Oshkosh, Wisconsin

OSHKOSH
 AREA UNITED WAY

Oshkosh logistics partners: Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, Oshkosh Area United Way, Father Carr's Place 28, Oshkosh Corporation, Amos, UW Oshkosh, J.J. Keller Foundation, Oshkosh Area School District

Volunteers Needed



The Military Veterans Museum and Education Center is looking for volunteers for various activities. Our hours of operation are Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 AM to 5 PM; however we also host private events during the week and need "behind the scenes" support. We are flexible with scheduling. Knowledge of Military History is helpful but not necessary.

**** Available Positions****

- Docents (Tour guides)
- Cataloging Artifacts
- Lawn/Building/Vehicle Maintenance
- PX (Cashiers)
- Technical Support (internet)
- Special Event Support

 Visit us Friday, Saturday , or Sunday between 10 AM and 5 PM
 4300 PobereznayRoad, Oshkosh, WI or Call 920-426-8615
 to sign up or email us at
 volunteers@mvmwisconsin.com

CONTACT US

Winnebago County
 Veterans Service Office

Oshkosh Location
 112 Otter St.
 Oshkosh, WI 54901
 (920) 232-3400

Neenah Location
 211 N. Commercial
 Neenah, WI 54956
 (920) 729-4820

Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.
 Send a request to:

CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us

Visit us on the web at:

www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans



www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO

For a list of more events, check out our calendar!