

Get an Agent Orange Exam: Protect Your Health

Some 371,307, or 14%, of the 2.6 million Americans who served on the ground in Vietnam have received physical examinations under VA's registry.

by Tim Dyhouse

Any and all Vietnam veterans who have not had an Agent Orange exam should do so immediately, according to VFW. Especially if they have cancer.

"If a Vietnam veteran has recorded documentation of a cancer that VA considers to be caused by Agent Orange exposure—such as prostate cancer—he will more than likely have a disability rating within two weeks," says John McNeill, deputy director of VFW's National Veterans Service. "VA is very quick on that."

Before visiting VA for an exam, McNeill says veterans should see a service officer for guidance. The service officer can explain the 12 conditions (see information box) that VA presumes to have been caused by Agent Orange exposure and that make a vet eligible for VA compensation.

Of the 12 diseases, McNeill says, VA grants most compensation claims for diabetes and prostate cancer. The two diseases are prevalent in the general population as well. Some 18.2 million people in the United States, or 6.3% of the population, have diabetes. And after skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in American men.

VFW urges all Vietnam vets to take the exam, which is part of VA's Agent Orange Registry program. By becoming part of the registry, Vietnam vets receive updates from VA on new diseases that have been added to the list or those that are being researched.

As of February 2005, some 371,307 Vietnam veterans had registered with VA's program and taken an initial Agent Orange exam.

As required by law, VA reviews research on herbicide exposure every two years and adds any diseases that may have been caused by Agent Orange.

The latest disease added was chronic lymphatic leukemia in January 2003.

Currently, VFW is pushing for melanoma—a deadly skin cancer—to be included. VFW delegates called for this last year when they approved Res. 698 at the organization's national convention.

McNeill says it's important for

Vietnam vets who have diabetes or prostate cancer to get registered immediately because they could be losing VA compensation.

"VA gives veterans with an active cancer an initial 100% service-connected disability rating," he says. "This rating stays in place while the vet undergoes

All Vietnam Vets Eligible for Exams

Since 1978, VA has offered free physical exams for Vietnam veterans based on their possible exposure to Agent Orange. Here is what VA provides:

- a pre-exam interview to determine where and when a veteran served in country;
- compilation of the veteran's medical history;
- a physical exam;
- a series of basic laboratory tests, such as chest X-rays (if appropriate),

urinalysis and blood tests;

- consultations with other health specialists, if needed;
- a post-exam interview to discuss results;
- a letter explaining the findings;
- a follow-up exam or additional lab tests, if needed; and
- notation of exam and test results in the veteran's permanent medical file and Agent Orange Registry.

12 Diseases Linked to Agent Orange Exposure

VA offers compensation to Vietnam veterans suffering from any of the following conditions, as well as their children stricken with spina bifida.

Chronic lymphatic leukemia: An uncontrolled growth of white blood cells in the blood, bone marrow and lymphatic tissues.

Chloracne: A skin condition that appears similar to common acne found among teenagers.

Diabetes: Disorders in which the body has trouble regulating its blood sugar levels.

Hodgkin's disease: Cancerous growth of cells in the lymph system.

Multiple myeloma: Cancer of white blood cells in bone marrow.

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma: Cancers of the lymph nodes, spleen

and other immune system organs.

Peripheral neuropathy: Damage to the nerves involved with sensation and feeling.

Porphyria cutanea tarda: A defective enzyme in the liver involved in producing the red pigment in blood cells.

Prostate cancer: Cancerous tumors on the male glands that surround the urethra at the bladder.

Respiratory Cancers: Cancerous tumors of the lung, larynx, trachea and bronchus.

Soft tissue sarcoma: Cancerous tumors in fat, muscles, nerves, tendons and blood and lymph vessels.

Spina bifida: Literally means "split or open spine" and is a birth defect that may affect children of Vietnam veterans.

“That’s because I know I don’t have any of the conditions that VA presumes to have been caused by Agent Orange exposure,” he says. “But if I was not a service officer, I wouldn’t know if I was eligible for compensation or not. That’s why it’s so important for Vietnam vets to consult a service officer. They can protect themselves—and their children—now and into the future.” ★

Agent Orange Review
Austin Automation Center (200/397A)
1615 Woodward Street
Austin, TX 78772-0001



Did YOU Get Your CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE?





United States Army Veteran

Certificate of Service

Staff Sergeant
Michael David Lewis
Served with Distinguished Honor
During the Vietnam War
in the Gulf War and Panama
Service from November 1971 to December 1982



United States Air Force Veteran

Certificate of Service

Captain
Arthur J. Stone
Served with Distinguished Honor
During the Vietnam War
in the Gulf War and Panama
Service from 1962 to 1974



United States Coast Guard Veteran

Certificate of Service

Port Officer First Class
Vernon T. Netherton
Served with Distinguished Honor
During the Vietnam War
in the Gulf War and Panama
Service from September 1972 to September 1982



United States Navy Veteran

Certificate of Service

Chief Petty Officer
Kyle R. Nelson
Served with Distinguished Honor
During the Vietnam War and Panama
War Service from 1972 to September 1982

Certificate ONLY \$35

Medals & Ribbons \$5 ea.

Price Includes Shipping and Handling

ORDER ONLINE

WWW.CJMCERTIFICATES.COM

or Call Toll Free for Brochure

1(877) 853-1296
















©2005 Dormia®. Comparison based on 2005 manufacturer's price lists.