



# Veteran's Advocate

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## Agent Orange Update for "Blue Water" Navy Vets



The Minnesota National Guard is pleased that the Army recently issued Post Deployment & Mobilization Respite Allowance (PDMRA) guidance and we are working with the Department of the Army and National Guard Bureau to promptly process the payments our Soldiers deserve.

A Minnesota National Guard PDMRA team has been assembled in order to certify our list of past and present Minnesota National Guard Soldiers who are owed PDMRA payments.

Our certification process includes verifying current service status and obtaining correct fund transfer information. This certification process for eligible Minnesota National Guard Soldiers is critical so that payments are both timely and accurate.

Eligible Soldiers still serving in the Minnesota National Guard will receive payments via electronic funds transfer. Soldiers who have separated from service will need to set up an electronic funds transfer arrangement with the Minnesota National Guard so they can receive their PDMRA payment.

The Minnesota National Guard will diligently process PDMRA payments and validate that every Soldier that is owed this benefit is paid correctly.

Minnesota Army National Guard Soldiers who were involuntary mobilized and released from active duty between Jan. 19, 2007 and Aug. 18, 2007, and served longer than a year, MAY be eligible to receive

*(Continued on page 2)*

VA's Compensation and Pension (C&P) Service has initiated a program to collect data on Vietnam naval operations for the purpose of providing regional offices with information to assist with development in *Haas* related disability claims based on herbicide exposure from Navy Veterans. To date, we have received verification from various sources showing that a number of offshore "blue water" naval vessels conducted operations on the inland "brown water" rivers and delta areas of Vietnam. We have also identified certain vessel types that operated primarily or exclusively on the inland waterways. The ships and dates of inland waterway service are listed below. If a Veteran's service aboard one of these ships can be confirmed through military records during the time frames specified, then exposure to herbicide agents can be presumed without further development.

- All vessels of Inshore Fire Support [IFS] Division 93 during their entire Vietnam tour.
- USS Carronade (IFS 1)
- USS Clarion River (LSMR 409) [Landing Ship, Medium, Rocket]
- USS Francis River (LSMR 525)
- USS White River (LSMR 536)
- All vessels with the designation LST [Landing Ship, Tank] during their entire tour [WWII ships converted to transport supplies on rivers and serve as barracks for brown water Mobile Riverine Forces]
- All vessels with the designation LCVP [Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel] during their entire tour
- All vessels with the designation PCF [Patrol Craft, Fast] during their entire tour [Also called Swift Boats, operating for enemy interdiction on close coastal waters]

(Continued from page 1)

PDMRA payments.

Soldiers who wish to verify eligibility should do the following:

**STEP 1:** E-mail the PDMRA Team at [PDMRA@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:PDMRA@mn.ngb.army.mil), the following information:

Name:

Rank:

Component you served with (i.e. IRR, USAR or NG):

Unit you deployed with:

Current Address:

Phone Number:

AKO Email Address:

**STEP 2:** Allow the PDMRA team seven business days to verify your PDMRA eligibility.

**STEP 3:** Monitor your AKO email so that the PDMRA team can verify and/or process your PDMRA payment in a timely manner.

Minnesota National Guard Soldiers who have questions or wish to verify eligibility should contact our PDMRA team at [PDMRA@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:PDMRA@mn.ngb.army.mil).

- All vessels with the designation PBR [Patrol Boat, River] during their entire tour [Also called River Patrol Boats as part of the Mobile Riverine Forces operating on inland waterways and featured in the Vietnam film "Apocalypse Now"]
- USS Ingersoll (DD-652) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, October 24-25, 1965]
- USS Mansfield (DD-728) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River August 8-19, 1967 and December 21-24, 1968]
- USS Richard E. Kraus (DD-849) [Destroyer] [Operated on coastal inlet north of Da Nang, June 2-5, 1966, protecting Marines holding a bridge]
- USS Basilone (DD-824) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, May 24-25, 1966]
- USS Hamner (DD-718) [Destroyer] [Operated on Song Lon Tao and Long Song Tao Rivers, August 15-September 1, 1966]
- USS Conway (DD-507) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, early August 1966]
- USS Fiske (DD-842) [Destroyer] [Operated on Mekong River, June 16-21, 1966]
- USS Black (DD-666) [Destroyer] [Operated on Saigon River, July 13-19, 1966]
- USS Providence (CLG-6) [Cruiser, Light, Guided Missile] [Operated on Saigon River 3 days during January 1964]
- USS Mahan (DLG-11) [Guided Missile Frigate] [Operated on Saigon River October 24-28, 1964]
- USS Okanogan (APA-220) [Attack Transport] [Operated on Saigon River July 22-23, 29-30, 1968 and August 5-6, 1968]
- USS Niagara Falls (AFS-3) [Combat Stores Ship] [Unloaded supplies on Saigon River and Cam Rahn Bay, April 22-25, 1968]

This decision opens the door to Navy veterans who served on these vessels to the legal presumption of their exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam, commonly called "Agent Orange". Therefore, they will be able to file claims to service-connected disability for medical conditions that are presumed by VA law to be related to Vietnam "Agent Orange" exposure. The following is the current list of disabilities:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne
- Type 2 diabetes (also known as Type II diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes)
- Hodgkin's disease
- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)



*Are you a woman that has or is serving in the Military and would like a "Battle Buddy" to accompany you to your Minneapolis VA Medical Center appointments? Sometimes it's comforting to have somebody to be there with us*

*We have a group of female volunteers ready to assist you. Please include your name, phone/email & date/time of your appointment.*

**If interested please contact Jaimie Bahl at:  
612-719-3631 or [sr71bbfan@yahoo.com](mailto:sr71bbfan@yahoo.com)**

**We are on Facebook at: Women Veterans Initiative Working Group**