

"Honor the Dead by Helping the Living"



*Department of Pennsylvania
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States*

Veterans Service Division
4002 Fenton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
717-234-7927

Wayne D. Perry

Commander – Wayne D. Perry

Christine Smith

Chairwoman – Christine Smith, Editor

Department Service Committee

Elizabeth Salvador, Co-Chairman
John B. Getz, Jr. Secretary
Wayne Perry, Member
Ronald Peters, Member
Russell R. Canevari, Member
Robert C. Eiler, Member
Dwight R. Fuhrman, Member
Cecil Dennis, Member
Benjamin A. Mastridge Sr., Member
Gary R. Smith, Member
Glenn R. Umberger, Jr., Member
Nathaniel Smith, Member

Service Bulletin

October/November/December 2019

FLU SHOTS

No cost flu shots are available for veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. Contact your local VA Medical Center or CBOC for listings of flu clinics times, dates, and locations near you.

Financial Assistance

Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF)

Veterans Temporary Assistance Purpose - "These guidelines describe the use of the Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF) to provide temporary financial assistance to eligible Veterans and unmarried Surviving Spouses of eligible Veterans when they face adverse financial circumstances and need assistance to provide themselves with the necessities of living. In general, assistance is provided under this section to replace or supplement income lost or reduced because of an unexpected change in circumstances or to offset unexpected increased costs or expenses that affect the ability to pay for the necessities of living."

"Need for Temporary Assistance." Financial circumstances unexpectedly resulting in insufficient funds to pay for Eligible Veteran (if Veteran is the applicant):

- Must have been discharged under Honorable conditions OR have a Service-Connected disability rated by the VA
- Must be a resident of Pennsylvania
- Must show financial need
- Must show either a loss of income or increase in expenses that renders the applicant temporarily unable to provide themselves with the necessities of living shelter and necessities of living for the Veteran and family... caused by unexpected loss of income, assets or support due to sickness, disability, unemployment, natural or manmade disaster or other cause beyond the control of, and not as a result of, misconduct by the applicant... An Honorable Discharge

Provide a DD-214 with Character of Service block showing service is General (Under Honorable Conditions) or Honorable. A VA code sheet or rating decision is also acceptable.

Form NGB-22 is not a DD-214. A DD-256 is also not a DD-214. DD-214 reflects active federal service, which is why it's used as the sole factor in determining character and dates of service.

Questions, comments, and concerns regarding the Veterans' Temporary Assistance (VTA) program should be addressed to the program manager. To learn more about the VTF, visit www.vtf.pa.gov or follow DMVA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/padmva.

Military Family Assistance and Relief Program

MFRAP's main focus is the Active Duty Soldier who experiences financial difficulty as a result of their military service or "Extenuating Circumstances". MFRAP was designed as an emergency "last resort" program.

Grants are issued in amounts up to \$5,000

Eligible Recipients

Members of the Armed Forces of the United States or its reserve components, including the PA National Guard, who are:

- Residents of Pennsylvania at the time of the application for assistance.
- Currently serving on Active Duty (other than for training) for a period of 30 or more consecutive days.
- A member of the Pennsylvania National Guard serving on State Active Duty for a period of 30 or more consecutive days.
- A member in good standing of any Reserve Component of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the PA National Guard, for a period of Three Years after release from a tour of active duty, authorized under Title 10 or Title 32, (other than active duty for training), or release from a tour of State Active Duty of 30 or more consecutive days duration, when the need for assistance is directly related to the following circumstances:
 - A sudden or unexpected loss of real or personal property, assets or support or Exigent Circumstances affecting the Service Member.
 - The death or critical illness of a parent, spouse, sibling or child resulting in an immediate need for travel, lodging or subsistence.
 - The wounding of the Service Member in the Line of Duty sustained as a result of combat or attack resulting in an immediate need for travel, lodging or subsistence. No more than two eligible relatives.
 - A natural or manmade disaster or other Extenuating Circumstances resulting in deprivation or food, shelter, or other necessities of life. Emergency need for childcare of dependent children.
 - Other immediate and necessitous case determined in the guidelines established for the program.
 - Exigent Circumstances: "Emergency or Extraordinary situations or conditions resulting in an Eligible Service Member being unable to provide the necessities of living for the Member or the Member's dependents due to factors beyond the Member's control. The term includes, but is not limited to, natural or manmade disasters, loss of home, loss of employment, disability or serious illness or injury."

Veterans Service Specialist – DMVA Phone: (717) 861-6500 or toll-free at 1-866-292-7201

Fax : (717) 861-8589

Email : ra-pa-mfrap@pa.gov

PA Wounded Warriors, Inc.

How to Receive Help:

Do you need emergency financial assistance for expenses like these?

- Housing security deposits, rent or mortgage payments.
- Basic Utilities (ex. gas, oil, electricity, water)
- Car payment, insurance or repair.
- Medical expenses.
- Education or job training expenses.

Are you a Pennsylvania resident?

Are you a veteran of the United States Armed Forces holding an Honorable or General Under Honorable Conditions Discharge?

Bring these documents to your appointment:

- Proof of Pennsylvania residency
- DD 214 (Discharge)
- Service-connected disability award letter (if you have one)
- Copies of lease and other bills you need assistance with. Ensure they have addresses and account numbers on them.
- If car repair, also bring copy of car title, car insurance and car registration

The social worker and caseworker develop the best course of action. If he/she chooses to request assistance from PAWW he/she will send the request to PAWW. Volunteers will review the request with the caseworker, will ensure it meets our requirements and determine if PAWW has the funds available. If we will send payments to the landlord and creditors. In all cases our volunteers will inform the social and caseworker on PAWW have decided to do. They do not send funds directly to a veteran. Contact information – info@pawoundedwarriors.org PA Wounded Warriors or [Contact Information: \(717\) 761-4017 or Fax \(717\) 260-3622. Help Line: 1-855-729-9435](#)

Hunting Licenses

PA National Guard and Reserve Armed Forces

A reduced-fee general hunting license is available to qualified residents who within the previous 24 months were deployed overseas for a period of 60 consecutive days or more or were released early from service because of an injury or disease incurred in the line of duty. Only one license may be issued for each qualifying deployment. Applicants must provide a valid military ID card, individual or unit orders showing the return date from overseas and proof of residency/home of record.

Antlerless Deer

Qualifying disabled veterans who are residents of Pennsylvania can receive a license upon application to the county treasurer of their choice. The fee for this guaranteed disabled veteran antlerless deer license is the same as the regular of military antlerless deer.

Free License for Certain Disabled Veterans

To be eligible:

- Must be a qualified PA resident;
- Disability must consist of the loss of one or more limbs, or the loss of use of one or more limbs or the applicant must present a certification from the VA indicating total disability; and,
- Disability must be service- connected and the applicant must be a veteran of any war of armed conflict. Discharge papers may also be required.

To be eligible for a resident disabled veteran lifetime license, the qualified veteran must meet one of the criteria shown above and, if qualifying under loss of use of one or more limbs or certification from the VA indicating total disability, present documentation that the condition(s) is permanent.

Parking Placard

No fee is charged to a veteran with a disability certified by the VA as service-connected for a parking placard designating the vehicle as used by a disabled person. Applications for any of the special license plates/parking placard can be obtained from any county director of veterans' affairs or by calling the PA Department of Transportation at 1-800-932-4600

Legal Help

Mark your calendars Wed. Oct 23, 2019 8 a.m. -11 a.m. at Wyndham Garden York. for an Access to Justice Community Summit. Attendees will learn more about the issues and where to direct families to better access legal services. Panelist to include ACCESS-York, Community Action for Recovery and Diversion (CARD), MidPenn Legal Services, PA Immigration Resource center, PA 2-1-1, the York County Bar Foundation, and the York County Court Self-Help & Law Resource Center. For more information, call 717-854-8755 ext.: 204.

Phone: 570 821-2535/2536

Fax: 570 821-2539

E-Mail: joann.kane@va.gov

Claims Consultant:

Lorie Ybarra

E-Mail: Lorie.Ybarra@va.gov

HARRISBURG

Christine Smith, Dept Service Officer

John Chiodi, Assistant DSO

4002 Fenton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17109

Phone: 717 234-7927

Fax: 717 909-7817

E-Mail: csmith@vfwpahq.org

E-Mail: jchiodi@vfwpahq.org

Harvey Greenawalt

E-mail: hgreena@vfwpahq.org

Assistant DSO:

Ronald Smith

E-mail: rsmith@vfwpahq.org

Elizabeth Graybill

E-mail: lizgraybill@yahoo.com

Claims Consultant:

Linda Jayman

E-mail: ljayman@vfwpahq.org

ERIE

Administrative Assistant

Rachel VanDyne

Rachel.vfwerie@gmail.com

VFW Erie Dept. Service Division

3112 Buffalo Road, Suite A

Erie, PA 16510

Office: 814 - 835-8494

Cell: 814-460-5838

Fax: 814 835-8493

Assistant DSO:

Charles Beattie

Email: Charles.vfwerie@gmail.com

Phone: 814-827-8494

Claims Consultant:

Julie Hutchison

Email: Julie.vfwerie@gmail.com

BUTLER

Linda Eshenbaugh

Claims Consultant

Butler VAMC

353 North Duffy Road, Rm. FN0001

Butler, PA 16001

Phone: 878-271-6976

Fax: (878) 217-6919

E-Mail: Linda.Eshenbaugh@va.gov

ALTOONA

Greg Finnegan, VFW Assistant DSO

VAMC Altoona

2907 Pleasant Val. Blvd.

Altoona, PA 16602

Phone: (814) 943-8164 ext. 8166

E-Mail: Greg.Finnegan@va.gov

LOCK HAVEN

Dave Bower / Cynthia Bardo / Elisa Snook MacMillen, Karen Brombia

VFW Assistant DSO

20 Bellefonte Avenue

Lock Haven, PA 17745

Phone: 570 748-5929

Fax: 570-371-5479

E-Mail: (Bower) dave.topdwb@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA VFW ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICERS

PHILADELPHIA

John J. Foster, Jr.
VFW Department Service Officer
5000 Wissahickon Avenue
(MAIL: VARO & Insurance Center)
ATTN: VFW, P.O. Box 42938
Philadelphia, PA 19101-2938
Phone: 215 381-3123
Fax: 215 381-3491
E-Mail: john.foster7@va.gov

Assistant DSOs:
Katherine Woodman
E-Mail: Katherine.Woodman@va.gov
Claims Consultant:
Gertrude V. Strain
E-Mail : Trudy.strain@va.gov
Evangeline Johnson
Email: Evangeline.johnson@va.gov

PITTSBURGH

Elizabeth Salvador
VFW Department Service Officer
1000 Liberty Avenue, Room 1601
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: 412 395-6259/6256
Fax: 412 395-6261
E-mail: elizabeth.salvador@va.gov

Assistant DSOs:
Clarence Madigan (EXT: 6260)
E-Mail: clarence.madigan@va.gov
Josh Croner
E-Mail: josh.croner@va.gov
Claims Consultant:
Kyra Price (EXT: 6258)
E-mail: Kyra.Price@va.gov

WILKES-BARRE

Joann Kane
VFW Supervisor/Claims Consultant
1123 East End Blvd., Bldg. 35, Suite 1
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Assistant DSO:
Luis T. Ybarra
E-Mail: luis.ybarra@va.gov

VIETNAM BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS

Disability benefits available to those serving offshore

Agent Orange Exposure in the Republic of Vietnam Waters (Blue Water Navy)

Blue Water Navy Veterans are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure. This extension of the presumption is a result of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, signed into law on June 25, 2019. The law takes effect January 1, 2020.

The law states that Veterans aboard a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia as defined in Public Law 116-23, between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides such as Agent Orange and may be entitled to service connection for conditions related to that exposure.

To be entitled to disability compensation benefits, these Veterans must have one or more of the conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure that are listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e).

What conditions are related to Agent Orange exposure?

Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne, or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus, Type 2
- Ischemic heart disease
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin's disease
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Multiple myeloma
- Parkinson's disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma).

How do I file a claim for disability compensation?

- Apply online using www.va.gov, OR
- Work with an accredited representative or agent, OR
- Go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you. You can find your regional office on our Facility Locator page.
- State on your application that you are filing for one of the presumed Agent Orange conditions.

- Include any evidence you have of service in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the required timeframe. Include the name(s) of the ship(s) and the date(s) you crossed within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam, if you have that information.
- Provide medical evidence showing a diagnosis of a current Agent Orange presumptive condition or tell us where you are being treated.

For more information on how to apply and for tips on making sure your claim is ready to be processed by VA, visit our Disability Compensation web page: www.va.gov

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to prove contact with Agent Orange?

No. You don't need to show that you came into contact with Agent Orange. Congress has provided that conditions on the list of presumptive diseases will be deemed to have been caused by contact with Agent Orange through service in the Republic of Vietnam, including offshore waters as defined by the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019.

What will the effective date for Benefits be for Blue Water Navy Veteran claims?

Presumptive Agent Orange conditions granted for Blue Water Navy Veterans may be retroactive to the date VA received your original claim. If you had a previously denied claim and you resubmit your claim, the effective date will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

When do the Blue Water Navy presumptions go into effect?

The Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 will take effect on January 1, 2020. Veterans can file claims at any time, and they will be decided after the law is implemented. Blue Water Navy claims and appeals currently in process have been placed on hold (stayed) until the new rules go into effect. The bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act gives VA until Jan. 1, 2020, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, VA is complying with the law that Congress wrote and passed.

How will the previously denied claims be handled?

If you had an Agent Orange claim with one or more presumptive conditions denied in the past, you are urged to **file a new claim**. Provide any new and relevant information regarding your claim such as dates you believe your ship traveled within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam, or updated medical information. Claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal will be reviewed under the new policy.

If a Blue Water Navy Veteran has not applied for benefits in the past, but would like to apply now will the presumption of exposure be extended to them?

Yes, VA will apply the provisions of the law to Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans who file new claims based on presumption of exposure to Agent Orange.

What happens if the Veteran dies before his or her claim is decided?

If the claimant dies while his or her claim is pending, a living dependent, such as a spouse or child, may file a request to be substituted as the claimant.

May the surviving spouse of a Blue Water Navy Veteran who passed away from a condition related to Agent Orange exposure, and who was previously denied compensation for such condition, become entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)?

If the Veteran served on a Navy or Coast Guard ship that that operated not more than 12 nautical miles from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia as defined in the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 and the cause of death was from a condition related to exposure to Agent Orange, then VA may award entitlement to DIC on that basis.

Where can I get additional information on disability compensation for Agent Orange?

Veterans with questions about benefits or filing a claim can visit the VA Agent Orange website www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/. They can also call the disability benefits call center at 800-827-1000.



DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS