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VA extends Agent Orange presumption to 'Blue Water Navy' Veterans



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for "Blue Water Navy" Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

These Veterans may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law June 25, 2019, and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2020. They may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

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.

"VA is dedicated to ensuring that all Veterans receive the benefits they have earned," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water Veteran community and minimize the impact on all Veterans filing for disability compensation."

Blue Water Navy Veterans are encouraged to submit disability compensation claims for conditions presumed to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Veterans over age 85 or with life-threatening illnesses will have priority in claims processing.

Veterans who previously were denied for an Agent Orange related presumptive condition can file a new claim based on the change in law. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy Veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the Veterans' service.

The new law affects Veterans who served on 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. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

To qualify, under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e).

See "From the Service Rep's Desk" for important claims information.

Meetings

The Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, September 5, 2019 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, September 26 at 7:00pm. Call the Chapter office for any changes in schedule. Chapter members are welcomed to attend.

Notice

If you have moved or changed your address, PLEASE notify us immediately. Call the Chapter office at (860) 568-9212, mail us at the address on the back of this newsletter or e-mail the Newsletter editor at ctchapter120@aol.com.

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Birthday Wishes

Birthday wishes go to our members born in July and August. May you have many more!

July

<i>Frederick E. Arnold</i>	<i>Glenn Beaulieu</i>	<i>Mary Beaulieu</i>
<i>Brian R. Brady</i>	<i>Dwight Burgess</i>	<i>Gary Chappell</i>
<i>William D. Chiodo</i>	<i>Hugo M. Ciaffaglione</i>	<i>Barry Dubofsky</i>
<i>Peter M. Heath</i>	<i>Ken Lewis</i>	<i>Peter Lund</i>
<i>Carlton A. Platt III</i>	<i>Eric J. Remkiewicz</i>	<i>John H. Siemer</i>
<i>James S. Tierney</i>	<i>Geraldine O. Traynham</i>	<i>Robert D. Venti</i>
<i>Charles R. Williams</i>	<i>Gerry Wright</i>	

August

<i>Paul Blow</i>	<i>Tom Bothur</i>	<i>Wayne B. Burgess</i>
<i>William Cancelli</i>	<i>Frederick Dellaripa</i>	<i>Glenda A. Doughtie</i>
<i>Craig J. DuPrey</i>	<i>Linda A. Dusek-Ravenell</i>	<i>John C. Honor Jr.</i>
<i>Edward Keany</i>	<i>Richard E. Lee Jr.</i>	<i>Kenneth W. Mader</i>
<i>Philip Morneault</i>	<i>Tim L. Oslund</i>	<i>Philip Petricca</i>
<i>Stephen Robillard</i>	<i>James Scanlon</i>	<i>Werner Seidler</i>
<i>Kenneth Seymour</i>	<i>Daniel C. Thurston</i>	<i>Gary E. Waterhouse</i>
<i>Joseph S. Wilusz</i>	<i>James Wisner</i>	

We missed a Birthday wish in June for Donald Mooers. Happy belated Birthday to you, Donald!

Chapter/State News

Extracted from The New London Day

Blumenthal, Courtney stand with ‘tireless’ advocate for Agent Orange victims

Gerry Wright (Chapter 120 Life member) will return to the road Sunday, July 7 — his 71st birthday — in his unending quest to grow support for Vietnam veterans plagued by the effects of exposure to Agent Orange, the herbicide used as a defoliant in Southeast Asia some 50 years ago.

Having sprayed the stuff from the back of a truck during two tours in Vietnam, Wright’s among the victims.

At a press conference on July 3 at Otis Library, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, stood with Wright, helping call attention to Wright's drive to win support for the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act, a bill that would eliminate the one-year “manifestation period” for certain illnesses linked to Agent Orange.

Currently, veterans diagnosed with any of three particular diseases — chloracne, certain forms of porphyria, and neuropathy — must demonstrate they developed symptoms within a year of Agent Orange exposure to qualify for medical and disability benefits. Other diseases linked to Agent Orange do not involve such a requirement.

Courtney introduced House versions of the bill in 2018 and 2019, and Blumenthal has done the same in the Senate.

“Gerry Wright is tireless, relentless ... in his advocacy for veterans,” said Blumenthal, recalling that he invited Wright to be his guest at President Donald

Newsletter articles/stories/photos

Any articles, stories and/or photos submitted for the newsletter must be received by the "cut off" date for any given month. Photos must be accompanied by text which describes the event, names, dates and any other pertinent facts so our readers understand the story behind the photo(s). The newsletter editor will announce the "cut off" dates at each Chapter meeting. The "cut off" date for our September 2019 newsletter is 23 August 2019. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

Trump’s State of the Union address earlier this year. Watching Wright buttonhole senators as they were dining the night before the address “was a sight to behold,” Blumenthal said.

Wright, of Andover, wore a T-shirt with: “We Came Home and Death Came With Us” on the back. He said he motorcycled more than 10,000 miles through 32 states last year, stopping to speak at coffeehouses and rallies and gathering petition signatures. He’ll set out again Sunday and plans to cover about 500 miles a day as he makes his way to Chicago, then heads north to Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana and beyond.

He said he suffers from heart disease, a skin rash, neuropathy and post-traumatic stress disorder. He said he never heard about Agent Orange’s effects until the late 1970s and first had his medical claims denied in 1981.

Courtney said Wright has built a considerable following on a Facebook site, “Sprayed and Betrayed,” and that he was struck by a photograph of a shirtless Wright on top of a truck in Vietnam, spray gun in his hands.

From The Hartford Courant

Connecticut becomes first state to give Hmong, Laotian veterans burial rights

As 77-year-old Gen. Sar Phouthasack stepped up to the podium in Veterans Memorial Park on June 27, his excitement was palpable.



Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz embraces Gen. Sar Phouthasack at Veterans Memorial Park on June 27, 2019.

“I’m so happy, I woke up at four this morning,” Phouthasack told the group gathered around the restored Army Huey helicopter memorial dedicated to Hmong and Laos soldiers.

Phouthasack, a Vietnam War veteran and former member of the Hmong and Laotian Special Guerrilla Unit who now resides in Windsor, spoke at the signing of a statewide policy granting burial rights for the SGU veterans in Connecticut.

“This is my country,” Phouthasack said. “I don’t know how to thank this country for what it has given to me, so many opportunities.”

Connecticut became the first state in the nation to provide the rights after Congress enacted the Hmong Veterans' Service Recognition Act in 2018. The act provides Laotian and Hmong veterans deemed eligible by the Department of Veterans Affairs burial rights in the nation’s national cemeteries, excluding Arlington National Cemetery. It also allowed for states to extend burial eligibility to Laotian and Hmong veterans in state veterans’ cemeteries, like the one in Middletown.

The Laotian and Hmong SGU fought alongside U.S. troops in the Vietnam War, often rescuing drowned U.S. soldiers and working with the CIA.

Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz began the ceremony, discussing her pride in Connecticut being the first state to recognize the SGU soldiers and offer burial rights. With more than 200,000 veterans in the state of Connecticut, Bysiewicz said it was time for the community to begin a program to honor World War II and Vietnam War veterans that did not previously receive thanks and recognition.

“You deserve this, your families and yourselves,” state Rep. Dave Yaccarino, R-North Haven, told the crowd, congratulating the newly recognized Laotian and Hmong Vietnam veterans present.

To Brig. Gen. Daniel McHale, who spoke at the ceremony, this is just the first step in paying back and recognizing the Laotian and Hmong soldiers. McHale called for the Laotian and Hmong veterans to receive the same medical treatment and benefits other veterans receive.

“We need to get federal veterans associations to recognize (the Laotian and Hmong veterans) have the same issues we do,” McHale said. “They were exposed to Agent Orange.”

The SGU continued to fight after the Vietnam War technically ended in 1975 and many were later sent to refugee and prisoner of war camps by the communists.

After the war ended, many of the Laotian and Hmong fighters came to America seeking refuge, and hundreds came to Connecticut. As of 2018, about 40 of these veterans still reside in the state, Phouthasack said.

Phouthasack expressed his gratitude for the country and the long-awaited recognition, saying, “Life is too short. Please do something for your family, your community, your country.”



Connecticut delegation at VVA National Convention



Connecticut delegates at the VVA National Convention. Our delegates will report on Convention activities and results at the Chapter meeting on September 5, 2019.

Hartford Vietnam Memorial Rededicated



The Hartford Vietnam Veterans Memorial was rededicated on Memorial Day 2019 – 30 years after its original erection. Members of the original Boy Scout Troop 105 who worked to build this monument were in attendance along with members of today’s troop and Chapter 120 members.

POW/MIA News



U.S. Servicemen Killed During Battle of Tarawa to Be Returned to United States

On July 17, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced the remains of at least 22 servicemen, killed during the battle of Tarawa in World War II, are being returned to the United States in an Honorable Carry Ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

The Battle for Tarawa was part of a larger U.S. invasion (Operation GALVANIC) to capture Japanese-held territory within the Gilbert Islands. The operation commenced on November 20, 1943, with simultaneous attacks at Betio Island (within the Tarawa Atoll) and Makin Island (more than 100 miles north of Tarawa Atoll). While lighter Japanese defenses at Makin Island meant fewer losses for U.S. forces, firmly entrenched Japanese defenders on Betio Island turned the fight for Tarawa Atoll into a costly 76-hour battle.

Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Servicemen killed in action were buried where they fell, or placed in large trench burials constructed during and after the battle. These graves were typically marked with improvised markers, such as crosses made from sticks, or an up-turned rifle. Grave sites ranged in size from single isolated burials to large trench burials of more than 100 individuals.

Postwar Graves Registration recovery efforts were complicated by incomplete record keeping and by the alterations to the cemeteries shortly after the battle. The locations of multiple cemeteries were lost. The alternations to other cemeteries resulted in the relocation of grave markers without relocating the remains beneath. These sites became known as memorial graves. As a result, many of the Tarawa dead were not recovered.

“Today we welcome home more than 20 American servicemen still unaccounted for from the battle of Tarawa during World War II,” said Acting Secretary of Defense Richard V. Spencer. “We do not forget those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, and it is our duty and obligation to return our missing home to their families and the nation. Thank you to everyone who took part in this repatriation.”

DPAA is grateful to History Flight, Inc. for their continued partnership and dedicated support.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died during the war. Currently there are 72,692 service members still unaccounted for from World War II.

At The Capitol



Governor signs veteran-related bills into law

With the year's regular legislative session now ended, the following veteran-related bills were signed into law by the Governor:

SB 800 - AA ESTABLISHING THE MEDAL OF MERIT FOR CIVILIANS. To establish a medal of merit for civilians.

SB 861 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF "SERVICE IN TIME OF WAR" AND STATE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS' SERVICES. To redefine "service in

time of war" and to remove a two-year residency requirement for certain veterans' services.

SB 863 - AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE CIVIL AIR PATROL. To prohibit an employer from discriminating against, disciplining or discharging an employee because the employee is a member of the civil air patrol or is absent from work under certain circumstances as a member of the civil air patrol.

SB 951 - AN ACT CONCERNING VETERAN ENROLLMENT IN CERTAIN ALTERNATE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS. To require fifteen per cent of available seats in certain alternate route to certification programs to be reserved for veterans.

SB 968 - AA ESTABLISHING THE MILITARY TO MACHINISTS AND VETERANS PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROGRAMS AND PROVIDING OTHER EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS. To establish a Military to Machinists job training program within the Labor Department for veterans.

HB 7063 - AAC LEASING OF MILITARY DEPARTMENT FACILITIES. To authorize the Adjutant General to lease military facilities to members of the armed forces of the state for ceremonies to recognize significant military career events.

HB 7064 - AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES. To change "veterans' service contact person" to "municipal veterans' representative" and to permit volunteers to serve as such representatives.

HB 7244 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS HAVING DISABILITY RATINGS. To increase the property tax exemption amounts for veterans having a disability rating and require the filing of a death certificate with the town assessor to continue such exemption for a surviving spouse or minor children after the veteran's death.

HB 7248 - AN ACT CONCERNING IN-STATE STUDENT STATUS FOR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES. To allow spouses and children of certain members of the armed forces to be deemed in-state students for the purposes of certain tuition charges.

On The Hill



Tester, Young, Murphy Introduce Bill to Curb Veteran Homelessness

Tuesday, July 9, 2019

In an effort to curb veteran homelessness across the country, U.S. Senators Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Todd Young (R-Ind.), and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) introduced the Veteran Housing Opportunities and Unemployment Support Extension (HOUSE) Act on July 9, a bipartisan bill allowing veterans with Other-Than-Honorable (OTH) discharges to participate in the Department of Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.

Studies show that veterans with OTH discharges are significantly more likely to experience homelessness than other veterans; even though only about five percent of separating service members receive an OTH discharge, they make up a quarter of the total homeless veteran population. Under current law, veterans with OTH discharges are unable to access VA case management services and are therefore denied housing vouchers under the HUD-VASH program. The Senators' bill expands access to vital HUD-VASH case management services, connecting chronically homeless veterans with the resources they need to find employment and housing.

"We need to do everything we can to end veteran homelessness," said Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member Tester. "The reality is that OTH veterans face a much greater risk of mental health disorders, homelessness, and suicide. Our bill ensures that these veterans in Montana and across the country are able to get back on their feet, put a roof over their heads, and find good paying jobs."

"This legislation will help ensure that many more chronically homeless veterans receive the housing support they deserve," said Senator Young. "I will continue to work to solve the housing affordability crisis for all Hoosiers."

"It is unconscionable that we allow our veterans who have put their lives on the line for our safety and security to become homeless," said Senator Murphy. "We've made progress, but far too many veterans are chronically homeless or unable to access to resources they need. I'm proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bill to allow other-than-honorable veterans to gain access to VA homeless services and HUD-VASH vouchers. This is the least we can do to thank them for their service to our nation."

Veterans Affairs News



From MOAA

No Decision yet From VA on New Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases

The VA has not announced any decision on whether it will provide disability compensation

for four diseases linked to exposure to Agent Orange by a scientific panel, breaking a pledge to make a decision by late June.

Despite a promise in March from a Veterans Health Administration official that VA would decide within 90 days whether to add four health conditions -- bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson's like symptoms -- to a list of diseases presumed related to herbicide exposure, a VA spokesman said in late June that none is forthcoming.

"We have no announcements on Agent Orange presumptive conditions at this time," a VA spokeswoman said June 26, three months after a hearing in which a VA official told a senator the decision was pending.

During a Senate Veterans Affairs hearing March 26, Dr. Richard Stone, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, said it was his "hope within the next 90 days that we'll have some decisions made."

In March 2016, the Institute of Medicine, an arm of the National Academies of Sciences, found evidence that two conditions, bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, are likely linked to Agent Orange exposure and that a third, Parkinson-like symptoms, should be added to the list of diseases presumed to be related to contact with the herbicide.

In November 2018, the organization, the National Academies, released a report finding sufficient evidence to link high blood pressure with exposure to Agent Orange. Hypertension previously had been designated as having limited or suggestive evidence that it could be related to contact with Agent Orange.

But high blood pressure is so common among older Americans that it has never been added to the presumptive list.

Having a diagnosis of a disease on the VA's presumptive list allows a veteran to bypass a requirement to prove that their illness is service-connected to receive disability compensation. Instead, they only need to prove that they served in an area where defoliants were used.

In late 2017, former VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin said he had decided whether to add several conditions to the presumptives list, and VA sent a recommendation to the Office of Management and Budget regarding the decision. But no further action was taken.

Responding to a question from Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, during the hearing, Stone said VA is working "through this right now," adding that the recommendation will go to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie for final approval.

From KARE11 News

Federal judges slam VA's handling of ER bills

After delivering withering criticism from the bench, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has ordered the Department of Veterans Affairs to produce detailed records about how it is has been handling claims for emergency medical care bills.

The VA is facing a class action lawsuit alleging it has failed to follow the law – and an earlier court ruling – requiring the government to reimburse veterans for emergency medical bills not already covered by insurance.

"Congress passed a law," said Judge William S. Greenburg at a recent hearing. "If you go to the emergency room, you're entitled to reimbursement. That's what we ruled in Staab!"

"No exceptions!" he added.

The Staab ruling was a landmark court decision in 2016 involving the Emergency Care Fairness Act (ECFA) passed by Congress and signed by President Obama.

The case involved a St. Cloud, Minnesota veteran and struck down the VA's policy of denying reimbursement of emergency medical bills to veterans if their third-party insurance covered any portion of the care.

However, in May 2019, a KARE 11 investigation revealed that 86-year-old Richard Staab still has not been reimbursed the nearly \$48,000 he paid out of pocket for his care.

"The reason I'm bringing up this shocking development," Judge Greenburg said, "is news reports...from Minnesota indicating the state of affairs for Mr. Staab."

"Three years!" he exclaimed. "Nothing's happened! Not a dollar! What do we have to do?" he asked.

Staab's nine-year battle

Richard Staab's story begins in 2010 when the then 77-year-old suffered a heart attack and stroke. He was rushed to a nearby hospital in St. Cloud and had open-heart surgery.

"That heart of mine was pounding so bad, I'm lucky I'm still alive I guess," Staab told KARE 11 in one of the first interviews he's done about his now-famous case.

Medicare covered a portion of his treatment, but Staab says he was ultimately left with about \$48,000 in out-of-pocket expenses for his hospitalization and recovery.



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2019

No. 19-14 Contact: Mokie Porter 301-996-0901

VVA to VA Secretary: Reverse Stay on Blue Water Navy Claims; Adjudicate Claims under Procopio

“Mr. Secretary, we are disappointed in your July 1, 2019, decision on the implementation of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, staying all Blue Water Navy claims until January 1, 2020,” wrote John Rowan, VVA National President, in a July 9 letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Our Vietnam veterans, on average, are 73 years old. Time is of the essence, as a grant of benefits can mean life-saving healthcare.” On behalf of our Vietnam veterans, I implore you to reconsider your decision to stay all Blue Water Navy and Korea DMZ claims.”

On January 29, in a 9-2 decision, the federal Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the veteran in Alfred Procopio Jr. v. Robert Wilkie, finding the intent of Congress in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 was to extend benefits to all veterans who had been awarded the Vietnam Service Medal.

“Under Procopio, VA has the authority to swiftly grant claims today,” noted Rowan. “Your decision is both frustrating and a step back from the progress VA had already made under Procopio.” In fact, the Veterans Benefits Administration has had procedures in place to apply Procopio since June 4. “Why has VA made the decision to stay all Blue Water Navy decisions, even ones it can grant under Procopio?” posed Rowan. “The saying, ‘delay, deny, and hope they die,’ is the unfortunate reality for our veterans and their families who continue to suffer from the lethal effects of Agent Orange.

“Your memorandum, Mr. Secretary, also ordered a stay in decisions on claims for children with spina bifida whose parent served in Thailand,” Rowan continued. While the new law may not give the VA authority to issue decisions until January 1, 2020, VVA urges VA to do whatever is necessary to locate eligible claimants, especially those who have already applied and were denied. The number of claimants impacted by this law likely is few, but the impact of connecting a young person child with spina bifida to compensation benefits, lifesaving healthcare, and vocational support is immeasurable.

“We are heartened by the administration’s request for a supplemental \$1 billion to cover VA’s IT costs and additional personnel to adjudicate these claims,” said Rowan. “We are ready to provide the support to ensure the successful implementation of this important new law. After waiting decades, there is no room or time to get it wrong now.”

From the Service Rep’s Desk



VVA Advice to Blue Water Navy Veterans and Survivors

VVA recommends Claimants start filing claims right away to protect effective dates. VVA is encouraging VA to start adjudicating claims before January 1, 2020 (See VVA Press Release of July 12, 2019).

Additionally, VA could still accept and adjudicate claims, but just not release any decisions while the stay is in place.

It is very important that veterans or spouses file the correct forms. Filing the wrong form could interfere with the effective dates or submission of the claim.

1) For Blue Water Navy Veterans or Spouses who have never filed a claim:

- Immediately file an Intent to File on VA Form 21-0966 to preserve the effective date. Once you have submitted the Intent to File and have gathered any accessible evidence, file a claim for benefits on VA Form 21-526EZ.
- Attach a Statement in Support of Claim, VA Form 21-4138, to the 21-526EZ explaining that the Claimant is eligible for benefits under the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, Pub. L. No. 116-23, 133 Stat. 966 (2019).

2) For Blue Water Navy Veterans or Spouses who have filed, been denied, and the denial is final:

- Submit a Supplemental Claim on VA Form 20-0995.
- Under the New and Relevant Evidence section explain that the Claimant is now eligible for benefits under the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, Pub. L. No. 116-23, 133 Stat. 966 (2019).
- As of right now, an Intent to file form will not preserve the effective date for a Supplemental Claim; therefore, you want to submit the Supplemental Claim a.s.a.p.

3) For Blue Water Navy Veterans or Spouses who have active claims or pending appeals:

- Wait for VA to start adjudicating claims and issuing decisions.

In every situation, it will be helpful if you gather and submit evidence showing that the Veteran’s ship was located within Vietnam’s territorial waters using deck logs or any other evidence that could prove the ship’s location. If you cannot locate deck logs or any evidence proving the ships location, you should absolutely still submit the claim. VA will assist in locating deck logs.

Also, the condition does not need to be on the Agent Orange presumptive list to be eligible for benefits. You can still make the argument that the Claimant is entitled to benefits under the direct service connection theory.

50 Years Ago

July 3 - MICHAEL FLEMING FOLLAND, MEDAL OF HONOR

July 3 - MICHAEL R. BLANCHFIELD, MEDAL OF HONOR

July 11 - GORDON R. ROBERTS, MEDAL OF HONOR

July 15 - JOHN G. GERTSCH, MEDAL OF HONOR

July 18 - RODNEY J. EVANS, MEDAL OF HONOR

August 4 - HENRY KISSINGER AND XUAN THUY BEGIN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS TO END THE WAR. Henry Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, meets privately in Paris with North Vietnamese representative Xuan Thuy and later Le Duc Tho to begin direct negotiations between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to end the war.

August 7 - BRUCE W. CARTER, MEDAL OF HONOR

August 24 - RICHARD A. ANDERSON, MEDAL OF HONOR

August 28 - JOSE FRANCISO JIMENEZ, MEDAL OF HONOR

11 August 1969 - LZ (Landing Zone) Becky. The night was an unusually black one. The moon was in its dark phase on 11 August 1969 and the sky was overcast. Visibility was less than 12 meters and the troopers of 2/8 Cavalry (2nd Battalion, 8th Regiment) manning the bunkers could barely make out the first string of wire. It was a night that was made to order for the sappers assigned to the 95C Regiment. The barefoot sappers had only made their way through the outer string of wire when they were spotted.

When the bunkers opened up, the base of fire elements of the NVA began pelting the base with rocket and mortar fire, and an assault by an estimated two companies of NVA infantry. The 0300 attack was driven back at a cost of 4 KIA and 14 WIA. One of the four killed in action that morning was PFC David Michael Freeman (MOS 11F20 – Scout Dog Handler assigned to E Company, 2/8 Cavalry [Airmobile]). PFC Freeman was a Pomfret CT native and is buried in St. Joseph's Cemetery, North Grosvenordale CT.



PFC David Michael Freeman

Receive "The Connection" by E-Mail

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, *The Connection*, is available by e-mail. Currently, 100 members receive the newsletter by e-mail, saving the Chapter over \$1,600 in printing and postal fees annually. The newsletter is available in Adobe format (.pdf), attached to your e-mail. If you wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail the newsletter editor at ctchapter120@aol.com

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