



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio

January, 2016 Newsletter

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FROM THE DESK OF STATE COMMANDER PHILLIP ALEXANDER



Happy New Year! We finally made it to 2016! For most of us we couldn't even imagine year 2000, not to mention 2016. I am wishing everyone a healthy, wealthy and prosperous year. The resolutions we made this year along with those that weren't completed last year should make us feel that we are continually accomplishing something.

Even though this year is just starting our organization is filled with many challenges and opportunities. As Disabled American Veterans we try to do our best and may we all continue to receive our blessings.

Some of us are getting ready for our 2016 Mid-Winter Conference in Washington D. C. All Veterans should try at this time to set up appointments to meet or correspond with your Senators, Congressmen and local representatives (don't omit County Veteran Service Officers - CVSO) throughout our state concerning Veteran rights, quality of healthcare, and overall concerns with the increased numbers of Veteran coming home with new and severe disabilities. Correspondence is easier now with the availability social media and internet. Every Chapter Commander or Adjutant should be able to assist or direct you to your local civil servants. With the large increase we want governing bodies to be prepared and start working on the solution now. This year we are faced with local Veterans employment, caregivers, DAV outreach program, women Veterans rights, education, and a number of TBI and PTSD just to add a few. In most cases VA facilities cannot keep up with the demand for medical attention.

This year we would like to increase and thank the dedicated volunteer services which vastly make our VAVS program among the top in the VA system. I would like thank everyone and ask you to continue to keep up the good work. Special thanks to all who attended and those unable to attend the dedication of PDC Samuel E. Lanza building Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in Warren, OH. The turn-out was overwhelming.

Those planning to attend the Mid-Winter Conference in Washington D. C should make appropriate arrangements. Consider being a mentor in your local Veterans Court system.

As always keep us informed of all the sick and shut –in so we can keep them in our prayers, special prayers for the Williamson family in their time of need.

BE OF SERVICE!

Phillip Alexander
State Commander

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

National Headquarters, DAV	(877) 426-2838
NSO Office, Cleveland	(216) 522-3507
NSO Office, Cincinnati	(513) 684-2676
Washington Office, DAV	(202) 554-3501
Cincinnati DSO, Tom Kirstein	(513) 475-6443
<i>Tuesday, Thursday</i>	
Lisa Wilson	
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	
Dayton DSO, Leland Sink	(937) 268-6511
<i>Tuesday, Thursday</i>	
Ricky Sickles	
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	
Wade Park DSO, Walter Dryja	(216) 791-3800
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	
Ext. 3395	
Chillicothe DSO, Darlene Maravilla	(740) 773-1141
<i>Monday- Friday</i>	
Ext. 7916	
Columbus Clinic DSO,	
Henry Snodgrass (614) 257-5487	
<i>Monday- Friday</i>	
Parma Clinic DSO, Richard Healy	(216) 739-7000
<i>Monday-Thursday</i>	
Ext. 2405	

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 21-24, 2016	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
March 18-20, 2016	I-X Piston Powered Auto-Rama, Cleveland, Ohio.
June 23-26, 2016	96 th Department of Ohio Convention, Crowne Plaza, Dublin, Ohio.
July 30-Aug. 2, 2016	National Convention, Atlanta, GA.
November 4-6, 2016	Fall Conference, Crowne Plaza, Dublin, Ohio.
Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2017	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
June 22-25, 2017	97 th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
July 29-Aug. 1, 2017	National Convention, New Orleans, LA.
Nov. 3-5, 2017	Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
February 25-28, 2018	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
June 21-24, 2018	98 th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
Nov. 2-4, 2018	Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.

NOTES FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT KENNETH MARCUM

THE BONUS ARMY



While reading this remember the names that are at the end; this is why history is so important, we don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past but yet learn from them and move forward...

In 1924, a grateful Congress voted to give a bonus to World War I veterans, \$1.25 for each day served overseas, \$1.00 for each day served in the States. The catch was that payment would not be made until 1945.

However, by 1932 the nation had slipped into the dark days of the Depression and the unemployed veterans wanted their money immediately.

In May of that year, some 15,000 veterans, many unemployed and destitute, descended on Washington D.C. to demand immediate payment of their bonus. They proclaimed themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force but the public dubbed them the "Bonus Army." Raising ramshackle camps at various places around the city, they waited.

The veterans made their largest camp at Anacostia Flats across the river from the Capitol. Approximately 10,000 veterans, women and children lived in the shelters built from materials dragged out of a junk pile nearby, old lumber, packing boxes and scrap tin covered with roofs of thatched straw.

Discipline in the camp was good, despite the fears of many city residents who spread unfounded "Red Scare" rumors. Streets were laid out, latrines dug, and formations held daily. Newcomers were required to register and prove they were veterans who had been honorably discharged. Their leader, Walter Waters, stated, "We're here for the duration and we're not going to starve. We're going to keep ourselves a simon-pure veteran's organization. If the Bonus is paid it will relieve to a large extent the deplorable economic condition."

June 17th was described by a local newspaper as "The most tense day in the Capital since the War." The Senate was voting on the bill already passed by the House to immediately give the vets their bonus money. By dusk, 10,000 marchers crowded the Capitol grounds expectantly awaiting the outcome. Walter Waters, leader of the Bonus Expeditionary Force, appeared with bad news. The Senate had defeated the bill by a vote of 62 to 18. The crowd reacted with stunned silence. "Sing America and go back to your billets" he commanded, and they did. A silent "Death March" began in front of the Capitol and lasted until July 17, when Congress adjourned.

A month later, July 28, Attorney General Mitchell ordered the evacuation of the veterans from all government property, entrusted with the job, the Washington police met with resistance, shots were fired and two marchers killed. Learning of the shooting at lunch, President Hoover ordered the army to clear out the veterans.

Infantry and cavalry supported by six tanks were dispatched with Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur in command. Major Dwight D. Eisenhower served as his liaison with Washington Police and Major George Patton led the cavalry.

By 4:45 p.m. the troops were massed on Pennsylvania Ave. below the Capitol. Thousands of Civil Service employees spilled out of work and lined the streets to watch. The veterans, assuming the military display was in their honor, Cheered. Suddenly Patton's troopers turned and charged. "Shame, Shame" the spectators cried. Soldiers with

fixed bayonets followed, hurling tear gas into the crowd.

By nightfall the BEF had retreated across the Anacostia River where Hoover ordered MacArthur to stop. Ignoring the command, the general led his infantry to the main camp. By early morning the 10,000 inhabitants were routed and the camp in flames. Two babies died and nearby hospitals overwhelmed with casualties. Eisenhower later wrote, "the whole scene was pitiful. The veterans were ragged, ill-fed, and felt themselves badly abused. To suddenly see the whole encampment going up in flames just added to the pity."

SOMETIMES THE WAR FOLLOWS YOU HOME

America is proud of its military members, but sometimes, for some, the war doesn't stay only on the battlefield. Undiagnosed traumatic brain injury, long-term depression, military sexual trauma, PTSD, drug addiction, and moral injury can follow a service member home after discharge especially when multiple deployments are required.

Some believe that because "only" 5,000 troops have lost their lives in conflict, as opposed to the 58,000 in Vietnam, the conflict must be less violent. In fact, the lower numbers of deaths is primary attributable to today's high-tech body and vehicle armor and modern battlefield medicine techniques that have prevented deaths from injuries that would have killed troops in past wars. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been incredibly violent, especially the up-close urban combat in Iraq.

The following evidence indicates that our current combat operations in Iraq are very intense. According to a 2010 study conducted by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, which surveyed combat comparison between Vietnam and Iraq:

Vietnam 58% - Iraq 94% reported receiving small-arm fire in cantonment
Vietnam 61%- Iraq 86% reported knowing someone who was injured or killed
Vietnam 49%- Iraq 78% reported seeing dead or seriously injured Americans
Vietnam 60%- Iraq 77% reported shooting or directing fire at the enemy
Vietnam 28%- Iraq 48% reported being responsible for death of enemy combatants
Vietnam 09%- Iraq 28% reported responsible for the death of a noncombatant

(Remember the average Vietnam vet had 1 tour in country; the average Iraq vet has had 3 tours in country). "People aren't designed to be exposed to the horrors of combat repeatedly, it wears on them," General George Casey, then-Army Chief of Staff stated in a 2010 press conference. General Casey was announcing the results of the above study which found that levels of PTSD significantly with repeated combat deployments. "Many of our troops are broken, yet we continue to send them in harm's way," stated General Casey.

Kenneth Marcum
State Adjutant

CHAPLAINS CORNER

Holidays are over and now for the NEW YEAR!

I hope that everyone gave Thanks!!!!!!???????

Giving Thanks in Every Situation?

Thanks in Situation? Will this deny your true feelings? Does it mean that when you snub your toe or hit your thumb with a hammer, your spontaneous response must be "THANK YOU, LORD"? Isn't it dishonest to give thanks if you don't feel thankful?

The Bible doesn't command us to feel thankful in every situation. It doesn't command us to manufacture positive feelings. Instead it command us to give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

To give thanks when you don't feel like it is not hypocrisy; it's obedience. To follow the word of God.

Robert Habern
Chaplain

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM ERA

In Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam Era, the Department Headquarters staff will be putting together a PowerPoint and Collage of photos of the veterans who served during the Vietnam War for the 95th June Convention.

Our idea is to have those veterans that served in the Vietnam Era, mail or email a photo of themselves in uniform during their service *and* include your years of service.

Participation is optional and all photos will be returned by mail promptly.

ALL DAV MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE!

If you would like to participate, please mail your photo to P.O. Box 15099, Columbus, Ohio 43215-0099 to the attention of Stephanie Williamson, or email your photo to Stephanie.johnson@ohiodav.org **BY JUNE 1st, 2016.**

RESULTS OF DAV VETERANS PULSE SURVEY

In 2015, the National DAV authorized a detailed survey through responses gathered by a global market research firm that utilizes the largest online panel representative of the U.S. population. The *DAV Veterans Pulse Survey* is the largest, most comprehensive assessment ever taken to reveal how generations of veterans from World War II through the post-9/11 view their military experience, benefits and overall quality of life.

Although the Survey found that veterans of all generations would repeat their military service, the veterans do not feel supported by the government. Survey statistics revealed that only one-in-five veterans felt that the government treats veterans well and less than half of the veterans believe they receive the benefits and support that they were promised.

The Survey also found meaningful differences between attitudes and experiences of post-9/11 veterans and those who served in earlier eras, as well as between men and women. Some of the highlights of the Survey are:

First, 81% of veterans believe that military service had an overall positive impact on their lives and they would enlist over again, but only 38% felt that they were not adequately supported when they re-entered civilian life. The veterans cited daily living, employment, skills training, finances, housing as their biggest challenges they faced upon leaving the military.

Second, only 50% of veterans in the Survey believe that the promises the government made to them as veterans have been kept and a disappointing low 22% of them believe that the government treats veterans well.

Only 44% of veterans report that they have received the health, disability, financial and educational benefits they were promised by the government. Only 18% of the veterans believe disabled veterans have received the benefits they were promised.

While 87% of veterans agree that the federal government should provide a health system dedicated to fulfilling the needs of ill, injured and wounded veterans, 50% feel that that the government is short-changing them in terms of the promise of providing quality, accessible health care to veterans.

Third, many post-9/11 veterans reported that their time in the military had adverse impact and effect on their health. The statistics in the survey indicated that 37% of the veterans indicated that military service had a negative effect on their physical health, while 28% of the veterans said their time in the service had a negative effect on their mental health.

Post-9/11 veterans are significantly more likely than veterans from other service eras to report that after leaving the military and becoming a civilian, they had a difficult time with relationships with their spouses or partner, children or parents and family members.

Post-9/11 veterans are also much more likely to report that finding meaningful employment after leaving the military is difficult, with 36% stating it was extremely rough.

Fourth, 56% of female veterans do not believe they receive the same respect and appreciation as their male counterparts; while 34% of male veterans think that women do not receive the same respect as men do.

Post-9/11 veterans are also much more likely to report that finding meaningful employment after leaving the military is difficult, with 36% saying it was extremely rough.

Fourth, 56% of female veterans do not believe they receive the same respect and appreciation as their male counterparts; while 34% of male veterans think that women do not receive the same respect as men do.

Fifty-six percent of women veterans would encourage their daughters to serve in the military, while only 34% of male veterans would encourage their sons to serve in the military.

Fifth, 85% of veterans say they appreciate it when strangers thank them for their military service. The most common activities of veterans to celebrate Veterans Day includes celebrating with family and friends, taking advantage of special offers at stores and restaurants and wearing a special piece of clothing to symbolize their military service.

The full report of the survey can be viewed at www.VeteransPulse.com

John Plahovinsak
Executive Committee

AFGHANISTAN VETERANS ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR THE OHIO VETERANS BONUS

Bonus payments range from \$500 to \$1,500

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Veterans Bonus continues a tradition of awarding bonuses to Ohio veterans that dates back to the Civil War, according to the Ohio Department of Veterans Services (ODVS).

“Ohio veterans answered the call to service when our nation needed them most,” said Chip Tansill, director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. “It is an honor to reward these brave men and women who fight for our nation’s freedom.”

The payment is \$100 a month to veterans who served during the eligible periods in Afghanistan up to a maximum

of \$1,000. For veterans who served in other parts of the world during these times, the payment is \$50 a month up to a \$500 maximum.

Veterans medically discharged as a result of combat service can receive \$1,000, regardless of how much time they spent in theater, plus up to \$500 for months of service elsewhere.

Family members of those killed in action or who died from disease as a result of their in-theater service can receive a bonus of \$5,000 plus whatever the service member was eligible for, up to \$6,500.

The eligible time period for service in Afghanistan or any location outside Afghanistan is from Oct. 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President. Eligible veterans must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into the service, and must be Ohio residents at the time they apply.

As of December 10, 2015 the Ohio Veterans Bonus program has paid 89,771 claims, amounting to more than \$73.3 million.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus is not financed with taxes. Ohio voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment allowing the state to sell bonds to provide a special payment from the Ohio Honors Veterans Fund to servicemen and women.

To apply for the bonus, visit www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov, or any County Veteran's Service Office (see www.dvs.ohio.gov for an interactive map of the county offices). Veterans and military families can also call toll-free to 1-877- OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838).

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services works to actively identify, connect with, and advocate for veterans and their families. Ohio law gives the department the responsibility to partner with county veteran service commissions and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in order to "serve those who have served."

SAM LANZA BUILDING DEDICATION **"A VETERAN, IS A VETERAN, IS A VETERAN"**



Tuesday, December 1, 2015 was a special day for not only DAV member and Trumbull County Chapter #11 Adjutant Sam Lanza but for all veterans in the Warren, Ohio area. The Samuel E. Lanza Veterans Resource Center is a new place on East Market Street, in Downtown Warren for the Trumbull County Veterans Service Commission that has plenty of space, ample parking, and that is easily accessible, especially for our disabled veterans. The facility is named in honor of World War II veteran Sam Lanza, the 89, soon to be 90-year-old former Marine from Warren and Purple Heart recipient for injuries he received in 1946 on Pacific Island of Okinawa. He has been an advocate for veterans for decades. Sam has been a member of the DAV for 67 years and the DAV Trumbull County Chapter #11 Adjutant for 64 years. Sam has held many duties within the DAV including being a Past Department Commander from 1997-1998. Sam is a former member of the Veterans Service Commission and in 2008 was inducted in the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. We are thankful for all that Mr. Lanza has done for not only the Disabled American Veterans, but all veterans!



KROGER DONATES TO PEERLESS CHAPTER #10



Portsmouth Kroger store manager Jay Wilson (front right) presents a check for \$1,000 to Ray Mitchell of Peerless Ch #10

On the morning of Monday, December 7th, 2015 the staff at the Portsmouth Kroger store presented a check of \$1,000 to the members of DAV Peerless Chapter 10. Store Manager Jay Wilson said it is Kroger's way of giving back to the community.

A letter from Cheryl McCormick, manager of community relations for Kroger said the company is committed to responding to the needs of their customers in the communities they serve and that their goal is to aid programs that serve and care for all people with fairness, respect and compassion.

Member of Chapter #10 Ray Mitchell stated, "This money will be well spent. The money will go to helping other veterans that belong to our chapter if they need help, maybe with a fuel bill or something like that. We take care of our own."

Mitchell also stated part of the money will also go to the DAV national campaign to help DAV hospitals throughout the State of Ohio.

“THE MISSING MAN TABLE”
CAPITAL CITY CH. #3 MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

Like many other DAV Chapters throughout the state of Ohio, Capital City Chapter #3 held their annual Golden Corral Military Appreciation Night Wednesday, November 11, 2015. The Hospitality Manager, Jeff Hill of the Columbus Golden Corral location went above and beyond to make the experience extra special by having the “Missing Man Table” and is also known as the “Fallen Comrade Table.” Mr. Hill comes from a military family and is an Army Veteran himself. The table has a special plate for all five (5) branches of the service to represent those that are with us in spirit.



The cloth is white –

Symbolizing the purity of their motives when answering the call to serve.

The single red rose reminds us of the lives of these Americans....and their loved ones and friends who keep the faith, while seeking answers.

The yellow ribbon symbolizes our continued uncertainty, hope for their return and determination to account for them.

A slice of lemon reminds us of their bitter fate, captured and missing in a foreign land.

A pinch of salt symbolizes the tears of our missing and their families – who long for answers after decades of uncertainty.

The lighted candle reflects our hope for their return – alive or dead.

The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain us and those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God.

The glass is inverted – to symbolize their inability to share a toast.

The chairs are empty – they are missing.

THE 2016 SUMMIT RACING EQUIPMENT I-X PISTON POWERED AUTO-RAMA

Presented by Rad Air Complete Car Care and Tire Centers

Friday, March 18: 3 pm – 10 pm; Saturday, March 19: 10 am – 10 pm; Sunday, March 20: 10 am - 6 pm

Teams with Medina VFW 5137, Local Veteran Organizations, multiple chapters of DAV, VVA, American Legion, VFW, Marine Corps League, Rolling Thunder and Knights Paladin M/C to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War.

Commemorative Programs Including Displays, Activities, Ceremonies, VA Enrollment, Support, Information and More to:

- Thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including POWs and MIAs, and their families, for their service and sacrifices on behalf of the United States.
- Highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal government and non-government organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
- Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.



\$5.00 OFF MILITARY DISCOUNT WITH VALID MILITARY ID

Military Admission – \$13 Kids 7-12 – \$5 Kids 6 and Under – FREE

ALLIANCE CHAPTER #50 DEDICATES NEW KIOSK



A kiosk that offers information on services available to veterans has been provided courtesy of the Carnation City Mall and it was recently dedicated in a ceremony that included representatives of local veteran’s organizations; Disabled American Veterans Alliance Chapter #50, American Legion, the Stark County Veterans Service Commission and veteran and Alliance Mayor Alan Andreani, along with mall manager Andrea Foley and several veterans representing the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy.

The kiosk is located just west of center court, the same place the Tribute to Troops kiosk is.

Mall supervisor and veteran Steve Holt did the physical work getting the kiosk ready and Carter's Copy Center provided copies.

GOLDEN CORRAL MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT



Cincinnati Chapter #1 Member Gerald Maynus and Cincinnati Chapter #1 Treasurer Eugene Smith.

FACTS:

- Golden Corral restaurants have served over 4.4 million free 'thank you' meals to our heroes in the military over the past 14 years.
- Golden Corral restaurants and their guests have donated over \$10.2 million dollars to the Disabled American Veterans organization in the past 14 years.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL DAV CHAPTER AND UNIT MEMBERS THAT VOLUNTEERED TO MAKE MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT SUCCESSFUL!



Cincinnati Chapter #1 Senior Vice Commander Charlotte Thompson and Cincinnati Chapter #1 Commander Edward Brown.

VA COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Our Nation's Vietnam War Commemoration is a long-overdue opportunity for all Americans to recognize, honor, and thank our Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices during one of America's longest wars.

VA Central Office, along with nearly 9,000 organizations across the country, has joined with the Department of Defense as a commemorative partner to honor our Nation's Vietnam Veterans. **I have designated March 29, 2016**, as a day for our Department to express our tremendous gratitude and support to this generation of Americans through ceremonies across the Nation.

This commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam—November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7.2 million living today, served during that period, and the commemoration makes no distinction between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call of duty.

This commemoration has special significance for those of us at VA because of our honored mission to serve those who have "borne the battle." It's also an opportunity to remember our VA colleagues who served in this generation of Veterans, to extend our heartfelt appreciation to them and to their families who shared the burden of their loved one's service.

Please visit <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/> to learn how your organization or facility can become a commemorative partner. This partnership provides historical media and beautifully-struck lapel pins and other recognition items for presentation to Vietnam Veterans.

Thank you for your continued service to VA and America's Veterans.

Robert A. McDonald
VA Secretary

VA PLANS TO PROPOSE EXPANDED DISABILITY BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO CONTAMINATED WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

“The water at Camp Lejeune was a hidden hazard, and it is only years later that we know how dangerous it was,” said Secretary McDonald. “We thank ATSDR for the thorough review that provided much of the evidence we needed to fully compensate Veterans who develop one of the conditions known to be related to exposure to the compounds in the drinking water.”

ATSDR determined that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks from 1953 to 1987. ATSDR also determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of certain health conditions.

Based upon VA's review of current medical science and ATSDR's findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for the following conditions:

- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Leukemia
- Multiple Myeloma
- Scleroderma
- Parkinson's Disease
- Aplastic Anemia / Myelodysplastic Syndromes

The Secretary's proposal would also expand benefits eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time from August 1, 1953, through December 31, 1987. These personnel would be presumed to have been exposed to the contaminated water during their Reserve or National Guard service and, in appropriate circumstances, to have been disabled by such exposure during service, thus allowing them to qualify for VA benefits under the statutory definition of “Veteran.”

This would make them eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any of the presumptive conditions, and their surviving dependents would be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

VA is working on regulations that would establish these presumptions, making it easier for affected Veterans to receive VA disability compensation for these conditions. While VA cannot grant any benefit claims based on the proposed presumption of service connection for these conditions until it issues its final regulations, it encourages Veterans who have a record of service at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, and develop a condition that they believe is related to exposure to the drinking water at the base, to file a disability compensation claim with VA.

VA will continue to grant claims for disabilities claimed to be associated with exposure to the contaminants that can be granted under current regulations and review of the evidence in each case. If a claim for service connection for one of the proposed presumptive conditions would be denied under current regulations, the denial will be stayed until VA issues its final regulations. VA will announce when the regulations are final and presumptive benefits can begin to be awarded. For more information on applying for these benefits, visit: http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-camp_lejeune_water.asp.

Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, are already eligible to receive VA healthcare for up to 15 health conditions. More information, including a full list of covered conditions, can be found online at: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/PUBLICHEALTH/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp>.

Veterans can establish eligibility for healthcare benefits by submitting VA Form 10-10EZ online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, downloading it at www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/1010EZ-fillable.pdf and returning it to any VA Medical Center or Clinic, or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM (Eastern Time).

VA is reimbursing certain veterans' family members for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered conditions. More information can be found at: <https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov>

SB10 MILITARY HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

Governor Kasich signed Senate Bill 10 (SB10 MILITARY HEALTH CARE BENEFITS (BURKE D, LAROSE F) to establish a process for identifying individuals who are medical assistance recipients that may be eligible to receive federal military-related health care benefits.

The bill was signed 22 December 2015 and will go into effect 90 days after December. You can view legislation at www.legislature.ohio.gov. If you have any questions feel free to call 888-387-6446 or email ohiovet@dvs.ohio.gov.