



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Disability benefits available to Vietnam-era Blue Water Navy Veterans

Blue Water Navy Veterans or their survivors are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure. Staff at the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services Veterans Service Office (VSO) can help those eligible apply for benefits.

Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans are those who served aboard a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975.

The Blue Water Navy Veterans Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-23), which took effect on Jan. 1, 2020, extended the presumption of service connection to include BWN Veterans. These former service members are now presumed to have been exposed to herbicides such as Agent Orange during their military service and may be entitled to benefits related to that exposure.

To qualify for disability compensation benefits, veterans must have one or more of the conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure. Those are listed in Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e). Eligible survivors of deceased veterans may also file claims for benefits.

Blue Water Navy Veterans will need a copy of their DD 214 discharge form to confirm eligibility or to reopen a previously denied claim. VSO staff can help former service members obtain a DD 214.

For more information, contact the VSO at 707-445-7611, or visit the office at 1105 Sixth St., Suite F, Eureka.

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