

Agent Orange Exposure Blue Water Navy

The Department of Veterans Affairs has released a new list of Blue Water Navy ships now determined to have operated on the Inland Waters of Vietnam. Additionally, they have added a new class of eligibility for individuals who had "visitation" to Vietnam while attached to a vessel that had smaller craft that regularly went ashore with either supplies or personnel. This new class includes veterans who may have gone ashore even if the ship did not dock, but was in close proximity to Vietnam for extended periods of time. This new list can be accessed at <http://www.bluewaternavy.org/newspage2.htm>

Those who are in any of the three categories explained in this new release are eligible for presumption of exposure to herbicides and are given benefits equal to those with boots-on-ground who are suffering from any of the diseases the VA has listed as related to herbicide exposure. That list can be accessed at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp>

This program, called Policy 211, began January, 2010 with the VA's active efforts to find all personnel who served offshore Vietnam but who may have had "duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam." This originally covered crewmembers of ships on Inland Waters but has recently been expanded.

Please note that the list includes entire classes of ships designated by hull type as well as named ships for their entire WESTPAC tours or for specific dates or date ranges due to their short term operations on the inland waters of Vietnam. This list is not yet complete and additions are made to it almost daily. If your ship is not listed and you feel you qualify as a crew member in one of the given categories, there are specific steps to acquire the documentation required to submit with your claim.

Please contact navy@bluewaternavy.org regarding the procedure to follow. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association is a portal through which you can submit the documentation for entry into the DVA database available to all Regional Offices and used to verify claims of herbicide-related disabilities by personnel who are not covered by the new boots-on-ground criteria.

Update provided by J. P. Rossie, Executive Director, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association (a 501[c][3] organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service).

Paul Sutton, Special Advisor