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News Release

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VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Korean War Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange *Will Provide Easier Path to Health Care and Benefits*

WASHINGTON – Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea will have an easier path to access quality health care and benefits under a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) final regulation that will expand the dates when illnesses caused by herbicide exposure can be presumed to be related to Agent Orange.

“VA’s primary mission is to be an advocate for Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki “With this new regulation VA has cleared a path for more Veterans who served in the demilitarized zone in Korea to receive access to our quality health care and disability benefits for exposure to Agent Orange.”

Under the final regulation published today in the *Federal Register*, VA will presume herbicide exposure for any Veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied.

Previously, VA recognized that Agent Orange exposure could only be conceded to Veterans who served in certain units along the Korean DMZ between April 1968 and July 1969.

In practical terms, eligible Veterans who have specific illnesses VA presumes to be associated with herbicide exposure do not have to prove an association between their illness and their military service. This “presumption” simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits and ensures that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

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Final Regulation on Korean Veterans 2/2/2/2

Click on these links to learn about Veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp> and birth defects in children of Vietnam-era Veterans at http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth_defects.asp.

VA encourages Veterans with covered service in Korea who have medical conditions that may be related to Agent Orange to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation as soon as possible so the agency can begin processing their claims.

Individuals can go to website <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> to get a more complete understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits.

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

The regulation is available on the Office of the Federal Register website at <http://www.ofr.gov/>.

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