

Agent Orange Action Checklist for Submitting a VA Health Care and Benefits Claim – Where to Start as of 12 March 2017

1. Go to our (www.USNA1973.com) website and read all the gouge and copy all that you will need to include in your V.A. Health Care and Benefits claim paperwork.
2. Get a copy of your DD-214. Make sure it is 100% accurate and includes your earning of a Vietnam Service ribbon. If it does not, get it corrected. (<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/correct-service-records.html>)
3. Get your medical record together, including that which describes and substantiates an A.O. related condition. You will also need an accompanying, signed letter from an MD verifying you're A.O. related diagnosis. (<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/>)
4. Make a copy of the Vancouver's roster of '73er embarked Midshipmen and highlight your name.
5. Make a copy of the Vancouver's "In Port Log" which notes her being in port Danang RVN with the Cleveland.
6. If you were on board the Cleveland, get a minimum of 3 Classmate, eye witnesses who can write "Witness Letters" for you. If on board the Vancouver, you can also include "Witness Letters," to add fire power to your claim...especially if the signee includes his USN/USMC (Ret.) information.
7. Find a US Military Service Advocate, Agent Orange Subject Matter Expert to help you make sure your p-work is in order. They are usually available at all VAMCs, city, county, state offices...the American Legion; VFW; DAV, etc.
8. Use a VA Benefits subject matter attorney, if you wish.
9. If you have any questions, double check (www.USNA1973) for the gouge, and/or check with one of our '73er Classmates who is standing by to help.
10. Recommendations: Do not be afraid to ask for help. Do not attempt to submit a claim without the help as previously described, even if you were a Rhodes Scholar, High Striper and/or PT Super.

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TASK FORCE 73/ AGENT ORANGE Update: March 14, 2017

The purpose of this email is to recommend that **ALL** classmates who sailed on board either the USS CLEVELAND or VANCOUVER for Youngster Cruise, contact the VA at a minimum to "enroll" in the VA Agent Orange Data Bank Register. Any '73er who made that cruise, regardless of service time afterwards is eligible and should look to the attached gouge sheet for specific actions to be taken. ANY ONE of us could begin to display the symptoms of any one, or more of those Agent Orange-related illnesses, at any time, if we have not already done so.

Off hand, we have at least 3 '73ers who had prior VA claims dating back 3, 5, to 10 years, denied in the past for "insufficient evidence," who are getting their appeals ready for resubmission of their claims...NOW with "sufficient evidence."

The **mission** of our Task Force 73/ Agent Orange is: To help any and all members of the Class of 1973 and 1971 and any other military personnel who were exposed to Agent Orange in the Vietnam War receive VA health care benefits and possible compensation to the maximum extent they earned, deserve, and to which they are entitled.

Your first step is to go to: <http://www.usna1973.com/home/> with links to

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp> and

https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhbh/publications/vhbh_sample_handbook_2014.pdf and

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/> . Become familiar with these sources.

When the Alumni Association sends out emails to our Class, there are about 700 addrees. As far as I've been able to determine, we've lost about 90 classmates from the 1288 who swore the Oath of Office with us. We want ALL to become informed of this critical health care issue. If your roommate or someone else in our class that you know doesn't get class-related email from me, it is incumbent upon you to make sure he knows what to do in this case. Again, graduation status has nothing to do with this!

We are fortunate to have two classmates who have become very experienced with the VA health care process: Bill Short (billshort@earthlink.net) and John DiLeonardo (dileonardojohn@comcast.net). Together they have developed the attached checklist for your use. If you have any questions at all, please contact them. We'd like to compile our own confidential '73 registry regarding this subject so we will have a better handle on the extent of the affected community. If nothing else, at least let either one of these classmates know you're registering with the VA and/or in need of more information.

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Kevin, Bill and John