

FIRST CLASS CRUISE – 1972 – NATRONPAC

During the summer of 1972 dozens of us were assigned to the USS Vancouver (LPD-2) and USS Dubuque (LPD-8) for our first-class cruise, along with hundreds of youngsters from the class of '75. During the return trip to CONUS both ships made a refueling stop in Guam. That stop was during the period when any service in Guam includes presumptive exposure to Agent Orange (AO).

If you participated in that cruise and are currently diagnosed with any of the medical conditions presumed to be caused by AO exposure (see the list below) you should apply to the VA for disability compensation.

While you will have to provide evidence that proves you have at least one of the presumptive medical conditions, the following documents will assist in providing evidence of serving in a location where AO exposure has been presumed by VA. These documents were obtained from historical records at the National Archives.

- Our first evidence provides proof that these two ships were exposed to AO as a result of a port visit to Guam for refueling while on the NATRONPAC cruise. At a minimum, your claim package should include the respective deck log excerpt from the ship you were embarked in, and either the “USS Vancouver-DANFS” document or the “USS Dubuque’s-COR 1972” document (as appropriate).
- Then you need to provide evidence that you personally were on this cruise and embarked in one of these ships.
 - For classmates embarked on Vancouver: the “NATRONPAC Mid Roster USS Vancouver” document below includes a roster by name and alpha code of all midshipmen embarked. This document should suffice for your evidence, include a copy in your claim package.
 - For classmates embarked in Dubuque: Dubuque did not include a roster of individual embarked midshipmen but did make a diary entry that states 336 midshipmen were embarked. We recommend you 1) include this document (“NATRONPAC Diary Entry USS Dubuque”) in your claim package along with a personal statement referencing that document and attesting that you were one of those mids; 2) contact 2-3 classmates who were also on this cruise and have them submit a “buddy letter” (statement) attesting that they were present on this cruise and can vouch for your presence onboard.
 - In either case if you have any other documentation, photos, etc. that show you onboard include those as well as they add value as contemporaneous evidence.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact one of the '73 volunteer VA advisors listed below.