

VETERANS CORNER

Camp Lejeune Water Contamination - UPDATE

The Veterans Affairs Department has recently determined that eight medical conditions are linked to service at Camp Lejeune, N.C. from 1953 to 1987, and veterans with these diseases who were stationed there are eligible for disability compensation. VA officials have stated, the following diseases have been determined to be service-connected to consuming contaminated drinking water at the base: kidney cancer, liver cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma, scleroderma, Parkinson's disease and aplastic anemia or other myelodysplastic syndromes.

The VA has historically provided health care or reimbursement for medical costs for veterans who served at Camp Lejeune at least 30 days during the affected period or family members with 15 illnesses related to exposure to water contaminated by solvents and fuels, but it had not awarded "presumptive status" to any condition until now.

The changes will take effect after VA publishes regulations regarding these presumptions, and will apply to new disability claims. Veterans who have previously been denied on such claims may seek to be re-evaluated. Also, any pending claims that might be denied under current regulations will be placed on hold until the VA issues its final rules. The new rules also will expand eligibility to reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time during that period.

In order to file a claim, you must be a veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, and you must have served at Camp Lejeune during the period of contamination (August 1953 through 1987). You must also have a current disease and a medical opinion that states the disease is a result of exposure to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license. We can also issue Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Scott Holwell if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

Scott Holwell, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Deputy Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail scott.holwell@co.kings.ca.us.