

Semper Fi

"THE SCUTTLEBUTT"

<http://www.mcltraecoheedet115.org/>

December 2017 Edition



Don Elseroad, Editor

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DETACHMENT OFFICERS

2017 - 2018

Commandant: Bob Miller

Senior Vice Commandant: Andy Bouma	Junior Vice Commandant: Roger Martinson
Judge Advocate: Currently Vacant	Junior Past Commandant: Ed Elder
Paymaster: Andy Bouma	Adjutant: Richard Hyson
Sgt-At-Arms: Jeff Merritt	Chaplain: Rhuel Goslee
Web Sergeant/Scuttlebutt Editor: Don Elseroad	

Original Charter Date May 10, 1970

MEETING TIME & PLACE

Meetings are always held on the second Wednesday of each month. The next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on January 10th, 2018 at 1900 (7:00 P.M.) at the American Legion Post 64, 1109 American Legion Road, Salisbury, MD 21801.

Please make every effort to attend.

Upcoming Holiday's & Events

January 1
2018
HAPPY
NEW
YEAR



2018 MCL Midwinter Staff Conference will be March 1-3, 2018 at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House and Conference Center, 2801 Plank Rd, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Group code: MCLMDWINTER18 Phone: (540) 786-8321 Room rate includes up to 4 breakfast vouchers per occupancy. TBA per night + prevailing tax (currently 11.3%) Please make your room reservation direct to the hotel no later than TBA at 540-786-8321.

Department of Maryland Convention

May 10-11 & 12, 2018

**Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center
9100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD 21842-2745
More info will be made available ASAP.**

2018 MCL National Convention will be held August 12th through the 18th, 2018 at the Buffalo Hyatt, Two Fountains Plaza, Buffalo, NY 14202. Phone: (716) 856-1234. Reservations open 0801 20 August 2017. Room price \$113 for one and \$130 for 2 people plus room tax.. Free parking, breakfast and wifi. More info will be made available ASAP.

"Sick or in Distress"

MCL Members and/or family members Carl EBAUGH, Rhuel GOSLEE, Missy HYSON, Fran HEARTHWAY, Ed ELDER, Gloria HOWARD, Walt and Jeanne COHEE are having or have recently had various health problems. Please keep these folks and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

"Membership Happenings"

(Please advise the Editor of any errors or omissions)

<u>JANUARY "HAPPY BIRTHDAYS"</u> 5th Ralph CAPEN 9th Missy HYSON 9th Barbara MURRAY 9th William WHEATLEY 23 rd Dena HOLLOWAY 24th Tara PARSONS 28th Sally HERLING	<u>JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES</u> None
<u>JANUARY MCL ANNIVERSARIES</u> Terry HERLING (6 yrs)	<u>WELCOME ABOARD</u> None reported to your editor
	<u>MEMBERSHIP'S RENEWED</u> None reported to your editor

DON'T LET YOUR MEMBERSHIP LAPSE

Check the expiration date on your membership card and if it reads November 1, 2017 or earlier you are due to renew.

Please send check made payable to "MCL Det 115" to our paymaster.

Andy Bouma, Paymaster
32175 Bonhill Dr
Salisbury, MD 21804-1464
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After 18 Months of Study, VA Delays Adding New Agent Orange Illnesses

After 18 months of review by his department, VA Secretary David J. Shulkin awkwardly announced Wednesday that he plans to "further explore" adding ailments to the list of compensable conditions VA presumes were caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War.

The decision to punt long-anticipated decisions on Agent Orange-related ailments will disappoint thousands of aging veterans with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension (high blood pressure).

Veterans and survivors were hopeful some or all of those conditions would be added to VA's presumptive list

of ailments linked to wartime herbicides, based on the latest and final review of medical and scientific literature on Agent Orange from the National Academy of Medicine (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine).

Instead, on the Nov. 1 deadline date that VA itself had set for this packet of decisions, Shulkin issued a brief statement at 6 p.m. promising only more delay.

“After thoroughly reviewing the National Academy of Medicine (NAM)’s latest report regarding veterans and Agent Orange, and associated data and recommendations from [VA’s] NAM Task Force, I have made a decision to further explore new presumptive conditions for service connection that may ultimately qualify for disability compensation. I appreciate NAM’s work and the commitment and expertise of [my] Task Force, and look forward to working with the [Trump] administration on the next steps in the process.”

A last sentence, not attributed to Shulkin, explained that the VA “will begin work with the administration to concurrently conduct a legal and regulatory review of these potential presumptive conditions for awarding disability compensation to eligible veterans.”

In the past, VA began a regulatory review only after the Secretary approved new ailments for the list. Shulkin hasn’t name any new illnesses. In conceding that VA experts already had “thoroughly” reviewed the latest science, however, Shulkin seemed to signal that parties elsewhere in the Trump administration didn’t want a VA announcement at this time rejecting or embracing new conditions.

“We thought we were going to get a decision sometime today,” said Rick Weidman, executive director for policy and government affairs for Vietnam Veterans of America. “Obviously we were mistaken. What they issued, to quote Sarah Huckabee Sanders [White House press secretary], is a Nothing Burger.”

“I am shocked and dismayed if this is the VA Secretary’s decision, to continue to delay,” emailed Carla Dean, who lost her husband, a Vietnam veteran, to bladder cancer last year. Now president of the Bladder Cancer Foundation of Florida, Dean said she remained hopeful that Shulkin will do the “right thing soon.”

One Vietnam veteran from Wisconsin who has fought bladder cancer since 2006 expressed “complete disappointment” with Shulkin’s statement. Asking that his name be withheld, he said he served at a “heavily sprayed” combat base in Quang Tri province. Lifelong residual effects of bladder cancer surgery, he said, include incontinence, impotence, severe weight loss and fatigue. He twice has been denied VA disability compensation because his cancer is not “presumptive.” list.

“I have talked to many other vets and the general feeling is that if the VA delays long enough, there won’t be any veterans left to worry about compensating for Agent Orange, because we will all have passed,” he said.

A spokesman for Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said he is reviewing VA’s announcement. But Roe “believes veterans waiting for a final decision deserve certainty, and [he] hopes Secretary Shulkin will work quickly to finish the legal and regulatory reviews.”

Dr. Kenneth S. Ramos, associate vice president for Precision Health Sciences and a professor of medicine at the University of Arizona, chaired the committee of medical experts that produced the NAM report that Shulkin has deferred acting on.

Ramos said his “gut reaction” to the statement “is that it’s positive. It’s very encouraging that the recommendations brought forth by the committee were thoroughly evaluated and are being considered for reevaluation by the department.” Ramos added, “The tone suggests receptivity to the seed that the National Academy has provided...When you look at past experience, any change in compensation policies seems to take time moving through the system.”

NAM delivered its report, *Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014*, to VA in March last year, after reviewing medical and scientific literature published from Oct. 1, 2012, through Sept. 30, 2014. NAM found evidence to support changing the strength of association between herbicide exposure and several ailments.

For bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, it found “limited or suggestive” evidence of an association to herbicide exposure, an upgrade from “inadequate or insufficient” evidence found earlier. For some ailments, including Parkinson’s and ischemic heart disease, limited or suggestive evidence has been judged strong enough to add the illnesses to the presumptive list. For other diseases, including hypertension, which is common in an aging population, it hasn’t been enough.

The NAM review also looked again at cardiovascular conditions and herbicide exposure. It didn’t upgrade the link to heart ailments but it did affirm limited or suggestive evidence that hypertension is linked to herbicide exposure.

It also studied whether conditions with Parkinson's-like symptoms should fall into the same limited or suggestive category as Parkinson's disease itself. NAM found "no rational basis" for excluding Parkinson-like symptoms from the same risk category. Parkinson's disease was added to VA's presumptive list in 2010.

Under a law Congress let expire in 2015, the VA Secretary had 180 days to consider a NAM report before deciding whether to expand the list of presumptive diseases to trigger automatic eligibility for disability compensation. Shulkin is under no such deadline. But a VA study group, followed by a VA task force, reviewed the NAM report. At one point a senior VA official predicted that by July 2016 then-VA Secretary Bob McDonald would have what he needed to decide on new presumptive ailments. Yet a year passed and McDonald opted to leave those decisions for the Trump administration. Shulkin had been McDonald's top health official during the NAM review period.

By late summer this year, Shulkin promised a decision on new ailments to the presumptive list by Nov. 1. Weidman said he suspects the White House's Office of Management and Budget blocked any plan to add new ailments to the list.

Weidman said members of Vietnam Veterans of America "are going to be really angry" with more delay, because "there is probably enough evidence now for the Secretary to declare other ailments" as tied to Agent Orange exposure, "glioblastoma first among them." And sailors and Marines who served aboard ship off Vietnam, the Blue Water Veterans, should have been deemed eligible like ground forces for compensation for presumptive ailments long ago, Weidman said.

"The ball is now in Trump's court," he added. "It's not something now that Obama did or did not do."

How the 2018 Tricare Changes Impact Tricare for Life Users

Almost all types of [Tricare](#) coverage will face sweeping changes, upgrades and reforms in 2018 resulting from legislation passed last year and a [contractor changeover](#).

The only part of Tricare that won't be dramatically impacted is [Tricare for Life](#).

That's because Tricare for Life, used by military retirees over age 65, isn't like the Defense Health Agency's other plans. Rather than provide stand-alone comprehensive coverage, Tricare for Life pairs with Medicare Part B as wrap-around coverage.

Quick Facts:

- Tricare's major changes impact almost all plans, including [active-duty families](#) and [military retirees](#).
- Tricare for Life is almost entirely exempt for the changes.
- The only change to Tricare for Life is a shift in the annual date deductibles and cost caps reset.

Like many of Tricare's other plans, Tricare for Life includes an annual deductible that users must pay out-of-pocket when receiving care. Tricare for Life users pay a deductible of \$150 per individual or \$300 per family in circumstances where services are used that Medicare does not cover. Also like other plans, those beneficiaries have a maximum amount they will pay out-of-pocket in any given year of \$3,000, known as a "catastrophic cap."

In the past, both of those costs -- the deductible and the cap -- reset every October 1st with the new fiscal year. Starting in 2018 that will no longer be the case.

That means for the remainder of 2017 only, all users who have hit their cap have an extra three months -- October, November and December of this year -- to receive care without additional fees. Those who have not yet hit their cap or deductibles will continue to pay toward the fee ceilings.

Like Tricare's other plans, starting in 2018 Tricare for Life will instead reset every January 1st, bringing the plans in line with the annual calendar used by most health insurers, as well as Medicaid and Medicare.

RAO Bulletins

Each month your editor attempted to review all RAO Bulletins and put articles deemed important to veterans into our newsletters.

However, what may be important to me may not be important to you and I may very possibly overlook something you as a veteran might like to know about, so I am providing a link below that will take you to the

current bulletin so that you might look it over. The below bulletin is dated December 15th, 2017 and must be viewed before January 1st, 2018 when it will go off-line.

[http://www.nhc-ul.org/Bulletin%20171215%20\(PDF%20Edition\).pdf](http://www.nhc-ul.org/Bulletin%20171215%20(PDF%20Edition).pdf)

EVERY DAY PRAYER REQUEST

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. Amen."

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE
Support Our Troops



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands,
One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

From your editor

If you are receiving this newsletter via "Snail Mail" and have email capability, please email me at 53usmc73@bvunet.net so that I can add you to my address book and cut down on the postage.

Any comments or suggestion on what should be in our newsletter! Articles/information you need! Let me know! The newsletter will go to press on or about the weekend following each meeting.

Don Elseroad, Editor

LINKS TO CHECK

Many of you if not all skip over these links. If you do you are missing out on some good stuff.

http://www.onlineatanthem.com/visitors/veterans_memorial/index.php

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/video/animals/adorable-police-dog-does-push-ups-with-officers-as-%e2%80%98eve-of-the-tiger%e2%80%99-plays/vi-BBFwCjh?ocid=U348DHP>

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/28/us/navajo-code-talkers-trump-who/index.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/uPNnsi2dJIQ>

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/video/tunedin/the-mysterious-origins-of-the-us-military-salute/vi-BBGiXA7?ocid=U348DHP>

-- *Once a Marine, Always a Marine* --

OOORAHHH !!!!!

GOD BLESS AMERICA

