

USNA '66 Wellness Brief:

VA

Thursday, 17 August 2023

Presented by Phil Bozzelli & Jim Galvin



USNA '66 Wellness Brief: VA



This is all about you and your family.

- Your health, longevity and the medical, social, and financial benefits you owe yourself and your family
 - *Can't make you prettier but may be able to make you healthier and wealthier*



You may have health issues attributable in some fashion to military service for which benefits are available.

- You may, but do not need to, use **VA facilities** to access these benefits.



An approved **VA 100% disability claim** will potentially increase the income from your military pension by 25% or more based upon your tax bracket and state tax rules

- However, you do not need to be a retiree to have these financial benefits.
 - ✓ They apply to veterans and we are all veterans
 - ✓ You do not need to be in the **VA healthcare system** to benefit
- Recent legislation makes the applicability easier to understand and apply
 - ✓ Especially for us who are Vietnam War era veterans



This is all about what you and your family rate

- There is no shame in claiming what is owed you
 - ✓ The shame may be in not claiming what is owed you and your family



Classmate Jim Galvin will address at the macro level the **VA claims** and benefits processes

- This brief is intended to encourage you to seek assistance in pursuing the **VA health benefits process**



My experience with VA Claims

- Gunfire
 - Tinnitus
 - Hearing loss
- Agent Orange
 - Ischemic Heart Disease
 - Hypothyroidism
 - Hypertension



- www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/blue-water-veterans.asp



Preventative Health Care

- Life Line Screening (lifelinescreening.com)
 - Detected Carotid Artery Disease

- Virtual Physical (virtualphysical.com*)
 - Detected Ischemic Heart Disease

*Google for virtual physical availability near you



Veterans Administration ([VA.gov](https://www.va.gov))

- PACT
 - ✓ Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics
- Expands and extends eligibility for care and benefits for veterans and survivors related to toxic exposures
 - ✓ Agent Orange Registry
 - ✓ Health Exam
- www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/



VA Booklet (142 pages)

- Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors
✓ www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp
- Information on healthcare and non-healthcare benefits
- List of Blue Water Ships: www.bwnvva.org/locatorlist



From the Veterans Administration

- Cancers caused by Agent Orange exposure

- ✓ Bladder cancer
- ✓ Chronic B-cell leukemia
- ✓ Hodgkin's disease
- ✓ Multiple myeloma
- ✓ Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- ✓ Prostate cancer
- ✓ Respiratory cancers (including lung cancer)
- ✓ Some soft tissue sarcomas

NOTE: we don't include osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma on our list of presumptive conditions.



Other Illnesses Caused by Agent Orange Exposure

- ✓ AL amyloidosis
- ✓ Chroracne (or other types of acneiform disease like it)*
Diabetes mellitus type 2
- ✓ *High blood pressure (hypertension)*
- ✓ Hypothyroidism
- ✓ Ischemic heart disease
- ✓ *Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)*
- ✓ Parkinsonism
- ✓ Parkinson's disease
- ✓ Peripheral neuropathy, early onset*
- ✓ Porphyria cutanea tarda*

*NOTE: under our rating relations, this condition must be at least 10% disabling within 1 year of herbicide exposure.



WHERE TO START for a Disability Claim, Health, Education and Survivor Benefits

- **VA**
 - ✓ File Online
- Veterans Service Organizations (VSO)
 - ✓ VFW/DAV/VVA/AMVETS/American Legion/others
- (Your State) Department of **Veterans Affairs**/Service
 - ✓ Google to find locations and contact info for each state
- Authorized Claims Agents and Law Firms (fee\$)



What USNA '65, '68 and '73 have done

- '65 Health Support Network
- '68 Parkinson's Support Group
- '73 Task Force *73 Agent Orange Team*



Related Topics

- Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC)
 - ✓ www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/disability/crsc
- Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP)
 - ✓ www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/disability/crdp
Google CRDP and CRSC: **Concurrent Receipt** explained
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
 - ✓ www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation



Concluding Remarks for VA Initiative

This presentation:

- ✓ Will be placed on Class website under the Wellness – VA tab
- ✓ Represents only a small part of what is available from the VA.
 - Important to remember that medical issues not covered in this presentation may be eligible for **VA disability claims** – need to ask.
- ✓ Contact **Jim Galvin** on questions regarding this VA briefing:
usna66jgg@gmail.com



An interlude

- Before Therese Long takes us on a tour of the web site, and
- Before we start the Q&A session
- Wanted to address the broader background of the class wellness initiative



Wellness Initiative

- www.USNA66/Class-Wellness/

✓ **Expanded to address broader Wellness categories** of Legal, Medical and Life Style considerations as well as the VA claims process addressed herein

✓ See Next Slide for more details

✓ Contact **Phil Bozzelli** on questions regarding this USNA Classmate initiative:

pbozzell1@verizon.net



Initial Layout of Wellness Categories

SECTORS	LEAD CONTACT INFO	LATEST UPDATE
OVERALL COORDINATOR	Phil Bozzelli pbozzell1@verizon.net	Webpages launched in August 2023
LEGAL (including Trusts)	RADM Rick Grant (ret.) hercules250gs@gmail.com	
HEALTH CARE (including Prostate)	Dr. John Williamson racquet66@swbell.net	
LIFE STYLE		
<i>Widowhood</i>	Don Jackson Djackson.ng@gmail.com	
<i>Assisted Living</i>	Andre Simonpietri andresimonpietri@aol.com	Summary posted on website
VA (including Agent Orange)	Jim Galvin usna66jgg@gmail.com	VA Briefing on 17 August 2023



Clarifications and anticipations - 1

- Although impetus for this wellness undertaking came from a presentation to the class presidents this year
 - '66 had its own programs well underway before then to include
 - ZOOM sessions for (1) Classmates, (2) Wives, (3) Widows
 - Class emergency funding for financial needs
 - Reaching out to and including widows for events such as reunions
- This Class wellness site effort is intended to build upon those experiences
 - Experiences that will continue as they were and no doubt flourish further
- We have presented '66 initiatives to other classes to include USNA Alumni Association
 - So that they might consider adopting them to meet their own unique idiosyncrasies '
 - What we present in the briefing regarding actions of other classes are unique to how each has sought to approach the issue



Clarifications and anticipations -2

- **Our class wellness is meant to apply to the broader “USNA ‘66 family”**
- Therefore this briefing will be recorded and placed on class website
 - Not only for the benefit of those who missed this or wish to review it, but
 - To use the wife’s network to point the wives to look at this presentation and
 - Thereby encourage classmate VA participation where appropriate
- Not only do we encourage the wives to come to the class wellness site for information for their husbands, themselves, and other family members
 - we welcome their contributions to the site via the listed sector leads
- As an example Kathy Prout has done pathfinder work regarding widow benefits:
 - appropriate and important to have that as part of the class wellness



Clarifications and anticipations - 3

- **Push or pull the info?**
 - We have looked at whether to "push" the health and wellness info out to the class via some form of email network, or
 - Have us all "pull" and encourage that "pull" for info and assistance when and as needed
- We have opted for the "pull" for various reasons not the least of which is to let people seek **what** they need **when** they need or want it



Clarifications and anticipations - 4

- **Feeding the “pull”**
- Intention is to continue to populate the class website with information and experiences offered by classmates
- As an example Andre, in the lifestyle section, has a short paper regarding assisted living considerations based upon his experiences
 - In addition to being a trusted source for views on this expensive and important topic,
 - We wish to encourage others to offer their experiences and insights for that and other forms of living arrangements (e.g. hunker in place, multi-generational living etc.)
- Similarly we will tap the class network of former legal and medical professionals
 - as well as those non- professionals whose medical and legal experiences are considered to be of possible value to our classmates



Clarifications and anticipations - 5

- **Feeding the “push”**
 - Our existing and varied Zoom networks have proven invaluable for both conversation and information
 - Without cluttering email in boxes
 - We will continue to tap into them to “push” what might be useful to classmates and their families
- We have by no means exhausted the topic of Veterans related issues
 - We will be reaching out to those network managers to help the “push” (e.g. claims related to water problems at Camp Lejune) and
 - Look for feedback from those networks regarding the wellness initiative



Clarifications and anticipation - 6

- Actions of the Alumni Associations
 - West Point's Alumni Association has undertaken to fund and develop an extensive wellness effort for its alumni
 - The USNA Alumni Association may or may not follow that model
- For now we have opted to pursue our class initiative and most likely would continue that way:
 - Because we believe that
 - For people to reach out for these private concerns there needs to be trust among the players – our shared '66 experiences have led to this level of trust, and
 - Help has to come with no perception of gain from that help



U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
Class of 1966 - NON SIBI SED PATRIAE

WELCOME NEWS EVENTS CLASS WELLNESS

Class Wellness

Non Sibi Sed Conscriptibus

Over the past half-century, the USNA Class of 1966 has demonstrated its willingness to support both our Classmates and the Academy with actions appropriate to the demands of the times and the spirit of the motto USNA, SE Patria. The success of those efforts has rested upon the shared experiences of the "family" and the trust and confidence we have placed in each other since our coming together in June 1962.



Our Classmates have demonstrated the ability to overcome the challenges of the young and to overcome imposed restrictions such as those arising from responses to COVID. In so doing we have not only met the Class' expectations, we have also met the Class' expectations to support each other with special attention to the ailing.

At our most recent live reunion - 55+1 - the timing and the timing of the call for the action of Classmates no longer part of the living network has motivated the need to address the newer challenges confronting our Class and the Class' family.

This Class Wellness initiative is not an original idea although over the decades our various Class leaders have envisioned and implemented actions that have been pursued on this objective and which we today consider well regarded like an overall Wellness platform.



This is a work in progress that we see changing and expanding over the years as appropriate to the needs of new times. The concept is to let our Classmate family use the experience gained over the years in help offered in the family. Rather than merely to offer solutions, the idea is to provide the right direction to allow each of us to find his or her own solution.

Below are four "tools" that link to pages we encourage having an open mind to resources learned by need for Classmates and their families.

- LEGAL
- HEALTH CARE
- LIFESTYLE
- VA

www.USNA66.org/class-wellness



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