



March 2010

Retired Activities Office Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Newsletter

Shift Colors. The Navy's Retirees newsletter *Shift Colors* is now being distributed only online at <http://www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Publications/ShiftColors/>. You can sign-up to receive an emailed copy at the same site. For additional information you can contact *Shift Colors* at:

Navy Personnel Command
Shift Colors
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055
E-mail: MILL_ShiftColors@navy.mil
Phone: (866) 827-5672

Eye exams. Retirees and their family members using Tricare Prime can get an eye exam every two years. These exams are more than the standard letter charts and include a check into the health of the eye. Those enrolled in Tricare Prime can make an appointment with any Tricare-authorized optometrist or ophthalmologist for an exam. You do not need a referral unless they see a provider outside of their region's Tricare network. Routine eye exams for retirees and their family members using Tricare Standard and Extra, and Tricare for Life are NOT covered. [Source: Tricare News Release No. 01-03-10 dtd 8 Jan 2010 ++]

All retirees, including Tricare for Life recipients, may receive one pair of standard issue glasses each year from the Naval Ophthalmic Support and Training Activity. Visit www.med.navy.mil/sites/nostra click on "How to order - Retiree" for more information. Family members and surviving spouses are not entitled to NOSTRA support.

Learn more about TRICARE vision benefits at the TRICARE beneficiary portal. www.tricare.mil/mybenefit.

Optical Pricing Online. Authorized shoppers now have access to the price of eyeglasses, frames, and sunglasses from more than 200 brands all discounted 10% to 30% with free shipping. For further information log onto your Exchange Online Store and click on the Exchange Mall Logo or access the site directly at www.exchangeonlinemall.com.

Loans. The Veterans Administration offers a number of home loan services to eligible Veterans, some military personnel, and certain surviving spouses.

* Guaranteed Loans: VA can guarantee a portion of a loan made by a private lender to help you buy a home, a lot for a manufactured home, a manufactured home, a condominium unit, or a

unit in a cooperative dwelling. VA also guarantees loans for building, repairing, and improving homes.

* Refinancing Loans: If you have a VA mortgage, VA can help you refinance your loan at a lower interest rate. You may also refinance a non-VA loan.

* Special Grants: Certain disabled Veterans and military personnel can receive grants to adapt or acquire housing suitable for their needs.

* Time Limits: There is no time limit for a VA home loan.

For additional information or to obtain VA loan guaranty forms, visit <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/>. or telephone your nearest VA facility.

Blue Water Claims. The VA has initiated a program to collect data on Vietnam naval operations to provide regional offices with information to assist in the Haas related disability claims based on herbicide exposure from Navy Veterans. Verification has been received from various sources showing that a number of offshore "blue water" naval vessels conducted operations on the inland "brown water" rivers and delta areas of Vietnam. Also identified, were certain vessel types that operated primarily or exclusively on the inland waterways. The ships and dates of inland waterway service are listed below. If a Veteran's service aboard one of these ships can be confirmed through military records during the time frames specified, then exposure to herbicide agents can be presumed without further development:

* All vessels of Inshore Fire Support (IFS) Division 93 during their entire Vietnam tour

USS Carronade (IFS 1), USS Clarion River (LSMR 409), USS Francis River (LSMR 525), USS White River (LSMR 536)

All vessels with the designation LST (Landing Ship, Tank) during their entire tour (WWII ships converted to transport supplies on rivers and serve as barracks for brown water Mobile Riverine Forces)

All vessels with the designation LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) during their entire tour

All vessels with the designation PCF (Patrol Craft, Fast) during their entire tour (Also called Swift Boats)

All vessels with the designation PBR (Patrol Boat, River) during their entire tour (Also called River Patrol Boats)

USS Ingersoll (DD-652) (Destroyer) (Saigon River, OCT 24-25, 1965)

USS Mansfield (DD-728) (Destroyer) (Saigon River, AUG 8-19, 1967 and DEC 21-24, 1968)

USS Richard E. Kraus (DD-849) (Destroyer) Coastal inlet north of Da Nang, JUN 2-5, 1966)

USS Basilone (DD-824) (Destroyer) (Saigon River, MAY 24-25, 1966)

USS Hamner (DD-718) (Destroyer) (Song Lon Tao and Long Song Tao Rivers, AUG 15-SEP 1, 1966)

USS Conway (DD-507) (Destroyer) (Saigon River), early AUG 1966)

USS Fiske (DD-842) (Destroyer) (Mekong River), JUN 16-21, 1966

USS Black (DD-666) (Destroyer) (Saigon River), JUL 13-19, 1966

USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6) (Saigon River), 3 days during JAN 1964

USS Mahan (DLG-11) (Guided Missile Frigate) (Saigon River) OCT

24-28, 1964)

USS Okanogan (APA-220) (Attack Transport) (Saigon River) JUL 22-23, 29-30, 1968 and AUG 5-6, 1968)

USS Niagara Falls (AFS-3) (Combat Stores Ship) (Saigon River and Cam Ranh Bay), APR 22-25, 1968. Also, Cam Ranh Bay is a qualifying location for "inland waterway" service

If you served on any of those vessels during the times specified, you will be granted, without further development and delay, a presumptive exposure to herbicides for the purpose of health care and monetary compensation. Note:

This list is not complete. If you served on a ship that entered the inland waterways of Vietnam, please contact navy@bluewaternavy.org with as much detail as possible so they can provide this information to the DVA for processing and inclusion in their data base. Source: Compensation & Pension Service Bulletin Jan 2010 Policy 211.

Preventive Health Program. DoD is putting into effect the Congressional ordered waiver of co-pays for some preventive services for those who use Tricare Standard or Tricare Extra. (Not Tricare for Life). The services are:

- Colorectal cancer screenings
- Breast Cancer Screenings
- Cervical cancer screenings
- Prostate cancer screenings
- Immunizations
- Well child visits for children under the age of 6 years
- The medical visit, if it is for one of the items listed above. If a patient has more than one of the listed services provided during the visit (and who wouldn't) then those other services are subject to co-pays and deductibles.

If you have had any of these services preformed since 14 OCT 2008 and paid co-pays and/or deductibles retain, or try to collect records to submit for reimbursement. The 2009 NDAA said that DoD could include TFL recipients under this program; but they were not compelled to do so. And not surprisingly, they did not. [Source: TREA Washington Update 2 Jul 09 ++]

The contractor will reimburse beneficiaries.

For requests by phone:

North Region: 877- 874-2273

South Region : 800-444-5445

West Region: 888-874-9378

For more information visit TRICARE online at www.tricare.mil.

San Diego ID Lab/Pass & Decal. The ID Lab located by the NEX and the Pass & Decal office located on Harbor Drive have moved to bldg 3436 (building located adjacent to current Pass & Decal office).

VA Assistance. For assistance in understanding VA programs or with a VA application, recommend you work with an approved Veterans Service Organization (VSO). It is their job to help you at no cost. To find a VSO go to VA's Directory of Veterans Service Organizations at <http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm>. You can also check with your state VA department and your state's network of county veteran service officers. Most are listed at www.va.gov/statedva.htm. If someone approaches you to help with a VA application, claim, or appeal, check to see if they are a VSO. There are a few organizations which use the front of helping with VA benefits as a way to meet prospective customers. These groups solicit for your business. They offer to get you money from the VA for long term care, assisted living, or survivor benefits. Thread lightly around these offers. On the surface they appear legitimate but if not, could wind up costing you time and money in the long run. Remember, VSOs do not solicit for your business, you have to find them. If you live around Orange County , California, check this site <http://egov.ocgov.com/portal/site/ocgov/menuitem.4981dc715fc6e27bdadd603d10000f7/?vgnextoid=cef3ea093e054110VgnVCM1000000100007fRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

Physical fitness facilities. For Naval Weapons Station information on classes, events, and opportunities at the fitness center, please refer to the Gateway Quarterly available at the fitness center, MWR office, RV Resort, and other MWR locations, or the CNIC Gateway at www.cnicgateway.cnic.navy.mil .

Discounts. This Army MWR site is excellent for travel/vacation/dining/etc. Take a look at it. <http://www.armymwr.com/travel/offdutytravel/default.aspx> .

Travel/Lodging deals. You are entitled to use the facilities and benefits available through the various MWR organizations. The Army has a good site at www.offdutytravel.com. It puts all sorts of options at your finger tips: Travel; lodging; camping and RV Parks; etc. Check it out.

How to Contact Us

The Retired Activities Office, Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, California is located in Bldg. 22, Rm 2. We are here to serve all Armed Forces retirees and are open M-Th 0900 to 1500; Fri 0900 to 1200.. You may contact us at (562)-626-7152 or by writing us at rao-nwssb@navy.mil

Captain Ralph Vogel, RAO Director
Don Cullen, Editor
Judie Yost, Contributing Editor
James Angeley, Contributing Editor
John Ryan, Publisher

www.cnic.navy.mil/sealbeach

