

BULLETIN – January 25, 2010

C&P Brown Water Navy Tracking Program

The VA, in a January 2010 Compensation and Pension (C&P) Service Bulletin, announced a new initiative to collect data on Vietnamese naval operations for the purpose of providing regional offices with information to assist with development in Haas related disability claims based on herbicide exposure from Navy veterans. To date they have compiled verification 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. VA has also identified 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 record 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.

The vessels currently identified via this program include:

- All vessels of Inshore Fire Support [IFS] Division 93 during their entire Vietnam tour
 - USS Carronade (IFS 1)
 - USS Clarion River (LSMR) [Landing Ship, Medium, Rocket]
 - 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, operating for enemy interdiction on close coastal waters]

- All vessels designated PBR [Patrol Boat, River] during their entire tour
- Also called River Patrol Boats as part of the Mobile Riverine Forces operating on inland waterways and featured in the Vietnam film “Apocalypse Now”
- USS Ingersoll (DD-652) [Destroyer] Operated on Saigon River, October 24 – 25, 1965
- USS Mansfield (DD-728) [Destroyer] Operated on Saigon River August 8 – 19, 1967 and December 21 – 24, 1968
- USS Richard E. Kraus (DD-849) [Destroyer] Operated on coastal inlet north of Da Nang, June 2 – 5, 1966, protecting Marines holding a bridge
- USS Basilone [Destroyer] Operated on Saigon River, May 24 – 25, 1966
- USS Hammer (SS-718 [Destroyer] Operated on Song Lon Tao and Long Song Tao Rivers, August 15 – September 1, 1966
- USS Conway (DD-507) [Destroyer] Operated on Saigon River early August 1966
- USS Fiske (DD-842) [Destroyer] Operated on Mekong River, June 16 – 21, 1966
- USS Black (DD-666) [Destroyer] Operated on Saigon River July 13 – 19, 1966
- USS Providence (CLG-6) [Cruiser, Light, Guided Missile] Operated on Saigon River 3 days during January 1964
- USS Mahan (DLG-11) [Guided Missile Frigate] Operated on Saigon River October 24 – 28, 1964
- USS Okanogan (APA-220) [Attack Transport] Operated on Saigon River July 22 – 23, 29 – 30, and August 5 – 6, 1968
- USS Niagara Falls (AFS-3) [Combat Stores Ship] Unloaded supplies on Saigon river and Cam Rahn Bay, April 22 – 25, 1968

Advocates are reminded of the provisions of the *Nehmer* decision, which recognized that veterans claims that had previously been denied under Agent Orange presumptions that are later granted by a change in policy through VA, such as the addition of a condition to the presumptive list, are entitled to an earlier effective date in accordance with the original claim filed, and not the claim under the newer provisions.

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