

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Social Work Service**



**Guide to  
Understanding the National Guard  
and Reserves  
September 2006**

Developed by:

**VHA Social Work Staffing &  
Clinical Practice Committee**

Emily Baldwin, LCSW  
Joanna Kadis, LCSW  
Deborah Walls, LCSW

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# Introduction

Following the distribution of the product “Military Facts for Non-Military Social Workers”, the members of the VHA Social Work Staffing & Clinical Practice Committee began to evaluate continued need for tools to enhance the practice of social work within VHA. With the demographic shift of veterans and with the significantly increasing numbers of activated members of the Reserves and National Guard seeking services through VHA, our committee has elected to develop another resource tool that will assist social workers in providing much needed services to this unique group of veterans. Please note that this information may continue to evolve and change, as the rules and regulations governing services to these veterans also evolve and change.

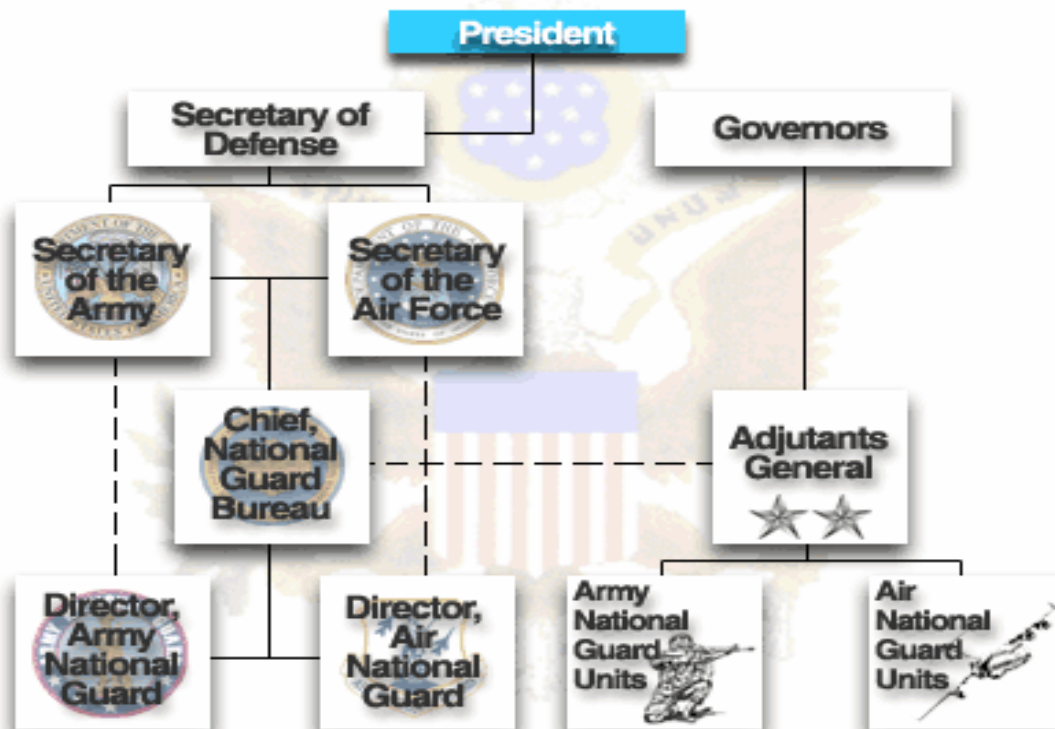
One of our greatest challenges is that VA staff often have little knowledge of the National Guard and Reserves and may not have a good understanding of the differences between them. The National Guard operates under the auspices of the individual states in which they are located. They may be called to duty by order of the state, or may be called up on executive order to federal duty. The Reserves operate under the umbrella of the individual branches of the military. During the OIF/OEF conflict, both the National Guard and Reserves have provided significant support and augmentation to the military in their activation and deployment overseas. The purpose of this document is to assist VA staff in understanding the makeup, history and purpose of the National Guard and Reserves, in addition to their place and relevance to the current conflict.

# Chapter 1:

## History of the National Guard

As of February 2006, more than 286,000 National Guard troops have been deployed to support Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Men and women serving our country in this capacity deserve special attention and have unique needs when returning from combat. Like the “Military Facts for Non-Military Social Workers” document created by the VHA Social Work Staffing and Clinical Practice Committee, this document serves to address multiple aspects of the National Guard and to educate VA providers so that they can provide the best possible care to these returning veterans.

**Organizational Structure:** First, it is important to understand the organizational structure of the National Guard. The National Guard is divided into two separate branches: Army National Guard and Air National Guard that are usually under the supervision of each State’s Governor, generally overseen by the State Adjutant General.



**History:** <http://www.ngb.army.mil/about/>

Founded 1636, Massachusetts Bay Colony, Articles of the Constitution call for a well-regulated militia in each state (power point presentation). To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

(US constitution, Article 1, Section 8)

The National Guard, the oldest component of the Armed Forces of the United States and one of the nation's longest-enduring institutions, will celebrate its 370th birthday on December 13, 2006. The National Guard traces its history back to the earliest English colonies in North America. Responsible for their own defense, the colonists drew on English military tradition and organized their able-bodied male citizens into militias.



"...The Whites of Their Eyes!"  
can be viewed full size in  
our Historical Paintings.

The colonial militias protected their fellow citizens from Indian attack, foreign invaders, and later helped to win the Revolutionary War. Following independence, the authors of the Constitution empowered Congress to "provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia." However, recognizing the militia's state role, the Founding Fathers reserved the appointment of officers and training of the militia to the states. Today's National Guard still remains a dual state-Federal force.

Throughout the 19th century the size of the Regular Army was small, and the militia provided the bulk of the troops during the Mexican War, the early months of the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. In 1903, important national defense legislation increased the role of the National Guard (as the militia was now called) as a Reserve force for the U.S. Army. In World War I, which the U.S. entered in 1917, the National Guard made up 40% of the U.S. combat divisions in France. In World War II, National Guard units were among the first to deploy overseas and the first to fight.

Following World War II, National Guard aviation units, some of them dating back to World War I, became the Air National Guard, the nation's newest Reserve component. The Guard stood on the frontiers of freedom during the Cold War, sending soldiers and airmen to fight in Korea and to reinforce NATO during the Berlin crisis of 1961-1962. During the Vietnam War, almost 23,000 Army and Air Guardsmen were called up for a year of active duty; some 8,700 were deployed to Vietnam. Over 75,000 Army and Air Guard members were called upon to help bring a swift end to Desert Storm in 1991.

Since that time, the National Guard has seen the nature of its Federal mission change, with more frequent “call ups” in response to crises in Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the skies over Iraq. Most recently, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, more than 50,000 Guard members were called up by both their States and the Federal government to provide security at home and combat terrorism abroad. Today, tens of thousands of Guard members are serving in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan, as the National Guard continues its historic dual mission, providing to the states units trained and equipped to protect life and property, while providing to the nation units trained, equipped and ready to defend the United States and its interests, all over the globe. <http://www.ngb.army.mil/about/>

**Natural Disaster Response:** Additionally, National Guard members are deployed to assist local operations when Natural Disasters strike. The largest stateside deployment in National Guard history occurred in August 2005 when Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast. 40,000 Guard members were deployed to the area and guard units from all 50 states, 3 U.S. territories and the District of Columbia assisted in the recovery efforts. (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/wh/rem/60873.htm>)

**Fighting American Wars Since 1636**

1637	Pequot War
1754 – 1758	French and Indian War
1775 – 1783	Revolutionary War
1812	War of 1812
1846 – 1848	Mexican War
1861 – 1865	Civil War
1898	Spanish American War
1917 – 1918	World War I
1941 – 1946	World War II
1950 – 1953	Korean War
1961 – 1962	Berlin Crisis
1964 – 1973	Vietnam War
1990 – 1991	Persian Gulf War
1995?	Bosnia
1999?	Kosovo
2001 – present	War on Terrorism

### Federal Mobilizations of the National Guard since 1900

<b><i>Army Guard</i></b>	<b><i>Air Guard</i></b>
World War I – 18 Divisions	
World War II – 19 Divisions	World War II – 29 Squadrons
Korean War – 8 Korean War-8 Divisions	Korean War – 66 Squadrons
Berlin Crisis – 2 Divisions and 104 non- Divisional Units	Berlin Crisis – 40 Squadrons
Vietnam War – 34 Units	Vietnam War – 5 Squadrons Persian
Persian Gulf War – 398 Units	Persian Gulf – 10,456 Airmen
LA Riots – 11,000 soldiers	Northern/Southern Watch – Ongoing
Haiti – 845 soldiers	Kosovo Air Campaign – 3,266 Airmen
Bosnia – over 11,000 soldiers so far	Bosnia – over 9,000 Airmen so far
ONE/OEF – over 30,000 soldiers so far	ONE/OEF – over 20,000 Airmen so far

# Chapter 2:

## History of the Reserves

First, it's important to understand that there are Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corp Reserves units. Each has its own long, distinguished place within the history of the US military. The oldest of the reserve branches is the Army Reserve that was established on April 23, 1908 and originally called "Medical Reserve Corps". Next, Franklin D. Roosevelt, then the assistant to the Secretary of the Navy, urged Congress to pass legislation for a federally funded official military force. Legislation was passed on March 3, 1915, which created the Navy Reserve Force. On June 3, 1916 the Air Force Reserves were established followed by the Marine Corp Reserves on August 29, 1916. And, on February 19, 1941, the Coast Guard Reserve was established by the passage of the Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary Act. Even prior to 1908 when the Army Reserves were established, the Navy had a reserve command called "citizen sailors" who were charged with protecting the United States from British enemies.

For detailed information regarding the history of each branch please visit the websites below:

**Navy** - <http://www.navyreserve.com/about/history.jsp>

**Air Force** - <http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/afrchistory.asp>

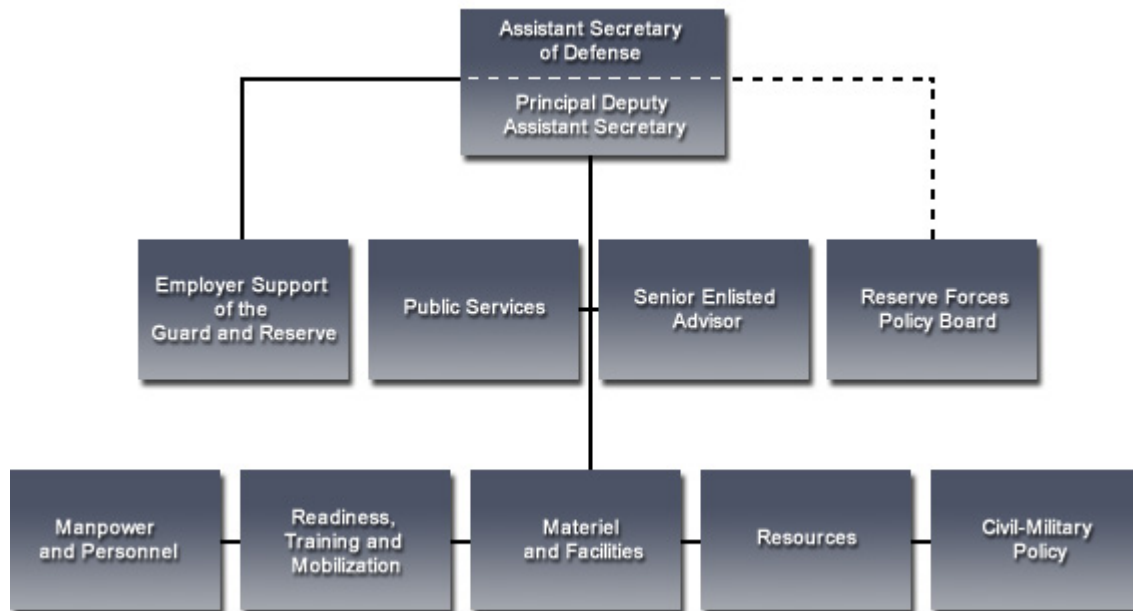
**Army** - <http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/ARWEB/MISSION/History.htm>

**Coast Guard** - [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/CG\\_Reserve\\_History.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/CG_Reserve_History.html)

**Marine Corp** - <http://www.worldsfinestnavy.com/NavalReserve.html>  
<http://www.mfr.usmc.mil/about.html>

**DoD Reserve Affairs** - Currently, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense – Reserve Affairs ([www.defenselink.mil/ra/index.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/index.html)) is charged with the mission "to serve as Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense with responsibility for overall supervision of matters which involve the Reserve components, including the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve".

Below is their organizational chart:



### **National Guard (In Federal Status) and Reserve Mobilized as of May 31, 2006**

Recently, the Coast Guard announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Army, Air Force Navy and Marine Corps numbers decreased. At any given time, services may mobilize some units and individuals while demobilizing others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease.

As of May 2006, the total number on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 79,715; Navy Reserve, 4,973; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 7,234; Marine Corps Reserve, 6,685; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 367. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 98,974, including both units and individual augmentees.

A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2006/d20060531ngr.pdf>.

# Chapter 3:

## VHA Eligibility

Eligibility for VHA services for members of the National Guard and Reserves can be confusing, when one is accustomed to working primarily with those who served in regular active duty service in the US Armed Forces. National Guard members are eligible for VHA services if they were mobilized as a result of a Federal Executive order. If they are mobilized as a result of an order of the State, they are not activated for the purposes of the federal government, and this time period will not count for VHA eligibility. Reservists must be activated on a full time basis, and must be serving in an operational or support role, as opposed to a training role.

As of 1998, Reservists and National Guard members who have served on active duty in a combat theatre are also eligible under special circumstances, to receive care through VHA (medical/hospital/nursing home services) for two years after discharge from active duty. This is true, whether the National Guard member served one day of active duty service or 3 years. This differs from those who served on active duty in one of the branches of the US Armed Forces, who (if service was after 1980) are not eligible for the same unless they served at least 2 years, served in a combat theater or were rated by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) as service connected. Please note, however, that co-payments may apply for care provided and any veteran receiving care should clarify their co-payment status with member services. **Additionally, eligibility for dental services is dependent on the veteran applying for services within 90 days of discharge from active duty *and* the DD214 must indicate that the veteran did not receive dental services in the 90 days prior to their date of discharge. Dental eligibility applies to members of the National Guard, Reserves and all other veterans of regular active duty service in the US Armed Forces.**

It is imperative that social workers who work with the Reservist or National Guard members remember to refer these veterans to VBA to file appropriate claims for service related injuries or illnesses and to apply for non-health care benefits. This will help to address continuity of care needs for those requiring ongoing medical/hospital/nursing home services after the 2 year period, specifically related to their combat related illnesses/injuries.

Information and resources related to Reservist and National Guard Member eligibility and may be found on the VA Office of Seamless Transition website: [http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov/res\\_guard.asp](http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov/res_guard.asp).

A brochure synopsizing National Guard and Reserve member eligibility for VA benefits is available on the following website: <http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov/seamlesstransition/docs/NatIGd-ReservesVABens0503.pdf>.

For questions about eligibility, check with your facility's Health Eligibility staff.

# Chapter 4:

## National Guard/Reserves Resources and Helpful Websites

### **A Quick Reference:**

VHA Health Care	<a href="http://www.va.gov/health_bene.ts/">www.va.gov/health_bene.ts/</a>
Returning Veterans	<a href="http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov/">www.seamlesstransition.va.gov/</a>
Survivors	<a href="http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors/index.htm">www.vba.va.gov/survivors/index.htm</a>
VA Facilities	<a href="http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp">www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp</a>
VA Forms	<a href="http://www.va.gov/vaforms/">www.va.gov/vaforms/</a>
VA Benefits Payment Rates	<a href="http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/">www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/</a>
Education Benefits	<a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov/">www.gibill.va.gov/</a>
Home Loan Guaranty	<a href="http://www.homeloans.va.gov/">www.homeloans.va.gov/</a>
Life Insurance	<a href="http://www.insurance.va.gov/">www.insurance.va.gov/</a>
Voc Rehab	<a href="http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm">www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm</a>
Burial and Memorial Benefits	<a href="http://www.cem.va.gov/">www.cem.va.gov/</a>
Veterans Employment and Training	<a href="http://www.dol.gov/vets/">www.dol.gov/vets/</a>
Federal Jobs	<a href="http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/">www.usajobs.opm.gov/</a>
Veterans Preference	<a href="http://www.opm.gov/veterans/index.asp">www.opm.gov/veterans/index.asp</a>
Records	<a href="http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/militarypersonnel/">www.archives.gov/st-louis/militarypersonnel/</a>
Department of Defense	<a href="http://www.defenselink.mil/">www.defenselink.mil/</a>

### **Adult Family Members**

#### **Post Deployment:**

- **Deployment Guide For Families of Deploying Soldiers. Separation and Reunion Handbook**  
[www.hooah4health.com/deployment/familymatters/reunion.htm#](http://www.hooah4health.com/deployment/familymatters/reunion.htm#)
- **Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Families**  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/guide/GuideforFamilies.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/guide/GuideforFamilies.pdf)

## Clinicians:

- **The Iraq War Clinician Guide, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**  
National Center for PTSD  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/guide/IraqGuide.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/guide/IraqGuide.pdf)
- **Management of Post-Traumatic Stress**  
Clinical Practice Guideline Working Group, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs and Health Affairs, Department of Defense, December 2003.  
[www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/PTSD/PTSD\\_Base.htm](http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/PTSD/PTSD_Base.htm)
- **The Unique Circumstances and Mental Health Impact of the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq**  
A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet by Brett T. Litz, Ph.D.  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs\\_Iraq-Afghanistan\\_wars.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs_Iraq-Afghanistan_wars.html)
- **Traumatic Grief: Symptomatology and Treatment for the Iraq War Veteran**  
A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet by Ilona Pivar, Ph.D.  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/traumatic\\_grief.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/traumatic_grief.html)
- **Recommendations for Pharmacological Treatment of Acute Stress Reactions**  
A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/disasters/fs\\_medication\\_disaster.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/disasters/fs_medication_disaster.html)
- **PTSD and the Family**  
A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet by Eve B. Carlson, Ph.D. and Joseph Ruzek, Ph.D.  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/specific/fs\\_family.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/specific/fs_family.html)
- **Reintegration Fact Sheet for Providers**  
Courage to Care, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences  
[www.usuhs.mil/psy/RFSP.pdf](http://www.usuhs.mil/psy/RFSP.pdf)
- **Resources for Working with Military Personnel and Their Families (Ken Pope's website)**  
[www.kspope.com/torvic/war.php](http://www.kspope.com/torvic/war.php)
- **American Psychological Association's "Resilience in a Time of War"**  
<http://www.apahelpcenter.org/featuredtopics/feature.php?id=43>
- **Military Family Research Institute of Purdue University**  
<http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/>

## Community

- **Welcome Home: How to make a difference in the lives of returning war zone veterans (includes Dr. James Munroe's "Eight Battlefield Skills that Make Life in the Civilian World Challenging")**  
Washington Family Policy Council  
<http://www.fpc.wa.gov/Welcome%20Home.pdf>
- **Helping Children and Youth Cope with the Deployment of a Parent in the Military Reserves (has information for parents, teachers, pediatricians, etc)**  
SOFAR (Strategic Outreach to Families of All Reservists) Guide  
[http://www.pcfine.org/sofarandguard/sofar\\_children\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.pcfine.org/sofarandguard/sofar_children_pamphlet.pdf)
- **How Communities can Support the Children and Families of those Serving in the National Guard or Reserves.**  
Military Child Education Coalition  
[www.militarychild.org/pdfs/GuardReserveForWeb.pdf](http://www.militarychild.org/pdfs/GuardReserveForWeb.pdf)
- **Operation: Military Kids**  
Army's efforts to support youth of National Guard & Army reserve families  
[www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org)

## Employment

- **American Job Bank** - A national on-line site where Chapter 31 job seekers and employers connect. When you register as a job seeker, you can search job openings and post your resume. Employers can announce jobs and fill positions with this national resource of skilled and qualified employees  
<http://dva.jobsearch.org/>
- **The Occupational Information Network** - O\*NET database takes the place of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) as the nation's primary source of occupational information. The O\*NET database and related products will help millions of employers, workers, educators, and students make informed decisions about education, training, career choices, and work. This O\*NET webpage correlates Military Occupational Codes with civilian codes.
- **SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD)**. OVBD is dedicated to serving the veteran entrepreneur by formulating, executing and promoting policies and programs of the agency that provides assistance to veterans seeking to start and develop small businesses.  
<http://www.sba.gov/VETS/>

- **USAJOBS** is a United States Office of Personnel Management website. USAJOBS is the Federal Government's official one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information  
<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**-To receive an evaluation for VR&E services, a veteran must:
  - Have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable
  - Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%
  - Submit a completed application for VR&E services.
  - To obtain further information, visit their website at:  
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre>
- **Center for Veterans Enterprise** -The web site for veteran owned businesses, "Veteran-owned small business concern" is a small business concern not less than 51% of which is owned by one or more veterans or, in the case of any publicly owned business, not less than 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans; and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans. (If you have other than dishonorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Services, or, for National Guard or Reservists, were activated to Federal Duty, you have veteran status for this program.) <http://www.vetbiz.gov/default2.htm>
- **Returning to Work: Tips for Service Members and Employers** - National Mental Health Association. [www.nmha.org/reunions/infoReturnWork.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/reunions/infoReturnWork.cfm)
- **Information Specific to National Guard and Reserve Personnel and Their Employers** - A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs\\_info\\_ngrsvspecific.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs_info_ngrsvspecific.html)

## Families

- **Military ONESOURCE** - See listing under Health
- **National Military Family Association**  
[www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage](http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage)
- **National Guard Family Program**  
<http://www.guardfamily.org>
- **Operation Healthy Reunions** (part of the National Mental Health Association)  
[www.nmha.org/reunions/index.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/reunions/index.cfm)

## Deployment:

- **Deployment LINK**  
[http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/deploy/family/family\\_support.shtml](http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/deploy/family/family_support.shtml)
- **Surviving Deployment**  
[www.survivingdeployment.com](http://www.survivingdeployment.com)
- **Military. COM Deployment & the family: top 5 things to do**  
<http://www.military.com/deployment>
- **Crisis Planning including Deployments**  
[www.odedodea.edu](http://www.odedodea.edu)
- **DoD Deployment Health support**  
<http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/deploy/family/familysupport.shtml>
- **Family Support of the Guard & Reserve**  
[http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/deploy/guard\\_reserves/rng\\_fsp.shtml](http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/deploy/guard_reserves/rng_fsp.shtml)

## Post Deployment:

- **Homecoming Preparedness for Veterans and Families: A Self-Help Guide to Ease the Transition from Deployment and the Military to Civilian Life**  
Veterans and Families Homecoming Support Network  
<http://www.mrs.marketingresultsgroup.com/ClientFiles/38FD2B5A75F34F31.pdf>
- **Being a Couple Again**  
National Mental Health Association  
<http://www.nmha.org/reunions/infoCouple.cfm>
- **A Soldier and Family Guide to Redeploying**  
DOD Deployment Health Clinical Center  
<http://www.apgea.army.mil/deployment/FamilyReunionTrifold19Dec03.pdf>
- **DoD Educational Opportunities**  
There are excellent guidebooks available for post-deployment challenges on this site.  
<http://www.militarystudent.org>

- **Fallen Patriot Fund**  
<http://www.fallenpatriotfund.org>

## **Federal**

- **Board of Veteran's Appeals** -The Board of Veterans' Appeals (also known as "BVA" or "the Board") is a part of the VA, located in Washington, D.C. Members of the Board review benefit claims determinations made by local VA offices and issue decisions on appeals. These Law Judges and attorneys who are experienced in veteran's law and in reviewing benefit claims are the only ones who can issue Board decisions. Staff attorneys, also trained in veterans' law, review the facts of each appeal and assist the Board members. Web address:  
<http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva/>
- **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)** <http://www.vba.va.gov>
- **Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents** (2006 Edition) - This booklet lists the variety of federal benefits available to veterans and their dependents. You will find the Federal Benefits for Veterans & Dependents booklet at:  
[http://www.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current\\_benefits.htm](http://www.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.htm)
- **Understanding the Appeal Process**  
<http://www.va.gov/vbs/vbs/bva/pamphlet.htm>
- **U.S. Congress** - For legislation bills, votes and actions.  
<http://Thomas.loc.gov>
- **U.S. Government Manual**  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html>
- **National Archives & Records Administration**-Code of Federal Regulations  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index/html>
- **Military Personal Records Center**  
<http://www.archives.gov/>
- **Electronic Code of Federal Regulations** - The Electronic Code of Federal Regulations (e-CFR) is a prototype of a currently updated version of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The e-CFR prototype is a demonstration project. It is not an official legal edition of the CFR. The e-CFR prototype is authorized and maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) Office of the Federal Register (OFR) and the Government Printing Office (GPO). The OFR updates the material in the e-CFR on a frequent basis.  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/>

- **Compensation for Disabilities Associated with the Gulf War Service**  
<http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21>
- **Compensation Rate** - Compensation & Pension (C&P) Service administers a variety of benefits and services for veterans, their dependents and survivors, including, but not limited to: service-connected compensation, DIC, non-service connected pension, burial & accrued benefits, guardianship and public contact services. To inquire concerning the status of your compensation, DIC, pension, burial, accrued, clothing allowance, automobile, specially adapted housing, or spina bifida claim or to ask any general C&P benefit question, you may call our toll-free number: 1-800-827-1000 or visit the web site at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/comp01.htm>
- **Due Process** - General Information on Due Process and VA benefits  
[http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21\\_1/mr/part1/ch02.doc](http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch02.doc)
- **Duty to Assist** - Description and General Information on Duty to Assist  
[http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21\\_1/mr/part1/ch01.doc](http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch01.doc)
- **Emergency, Non-emergency, and Fee Basis Care** - View the 2006 Edition of the Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents (Page 15)  
  
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf>
- **Environmental Agents** - The VA Environmental Agents Service (EAS) administers health care programs related to environmental issues, including Operations Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF), Gulf War, Agent Orange, depleted uranium, ionizing radiation, and Project 112 (Including Project SHAD). EAS also oversees the War-Related Illness and Injury Study Centers (WRIISCs). Organizationally, EAS falls under the Occupational and Environmental Health Strategic Health Care Group of the Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards.

#### **PROGRAMS:**

- OIF/OEF Operations
- Gulf War
- Veterans and Agent Orange
- Depleted Uranium Follow-Up Program
- Ionizing Radiation
- Project 112 (including Project SHAD)
- War-Related Illness and Injury Centers (WRIISC)

Web page: <http://www1.va.gov/environagents>

- **Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents 2006**  
View the 2006 Edition of the Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents  
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf> or  
[http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current\\_benefits.htm](http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.htm)
- **Evaluation Protocol for Gulf War and Iraqi Freedom Veterans with Potential Exposure to Depleted Uranium (Du)** -This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook outlines the policy and procedures for evaluating Gulf War (GW) veterans, including those who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), with possible exposure to depleted uranium (DU).  
  
<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DUHandbook1303122304.DOC>  
And/Or  
[http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=1158](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1158)
- **Fee Basis, PRIORITY FOR OUTPATIENT MEDICAL SERVICES AND INPATIENT HOSPITAL CARE** -This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) website outlines the Directive, policies and actions required in support of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) commitment to providing priority care for non-emergency outpatient medical services and inpatient hospital care for any veteran with service connected (SC) disabilities rated 50 percent or greater.  
[http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=206](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=206)
- **Forms and Records Request** - Forms on this site are available in several formats. Fillable pdf can be filled on-line, printed, saved and edited. Certain forms can be filled on-line, printed, and saved to your pc but cannot be edited later. <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>
- **General Compensation Provisions** - US Code: Title 38 Veteran Benefits, Part 11 General Benefits, Compensation For Service-Connected Disability Or Death\_And Subchapter VI General Compensation Provisions  
  
[http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/part11\\_subchaptervi.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/part11_subchaptervi.html)
- **Military Record Requests** – To obtain a government form to order a copy of your DD-214:

<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/standard-form-180.html>

- **Persian Gulf Registry** - Handbook outlining The Persian Gulf Registry (Pgr) Program. (Please Note that this program is now referred to as Gulf War) <http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication>

## **General**

- **National Center for PTSD**  
[www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)
- **Military OneSource** (1-800-342-9647; userid: military; password: onesource)  
[www.militaryonesource.com/](http://www.militaryonesource.com/)
- **VA's Seamless Transition Office**  
[www.seamlesstransition.va.gov](http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov)

## **Health Issues**

- **Chemical Warfare page**  
<http://www.chem.sc.edu/facility/morgan/resources/cw/cw.pdf>
- **Disability Examination Worksheets Index, Comp**-In this website, you will find a listing of 57 Disability Examination Worksheets are in use both by the doctors of VHA (Veterans Health Administration) who do the disability examinations and by the rating specialists, hearing officers, and Decision Review Officers of VBA (Veterans Benefits Administration) who do the disability evaluations.  
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/exams/index.htm>
- **VA fact sheets**  
<http://www1.va.gov/OPA/fact/>
- **Department of Defense Military Health System**  
<http://www.tricare.osd.mil>
- **Vet Centers (Readjustment Counseling)**  
<http://www.va.gov/rcs/Index.htm>  
<http://online.onetcenter.org/crosswalk>
- **Traumatic Brain Injury**  
[www.biausa.org/Pages/home.html](http://www.biausa.org/Pages/home.html)

- **Fisher House Program** – Provides lodging for families of hospitalized active duty service members and veterans who are visiting. There are Fisher Houses at 8 VA medical centers (Albany, Bay Pines, Cincinnati, Denver, Houston, Minneapolis, Palo Alto and West Palm Beach). Go to: <http://www.fisherhouse.org>.
- **Operation Hero Miles** – Provides free airline tickets to families of OIF/OEF veterans hospitalized in VA or DoD medical centers. The application is in the Appendix.
- **Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center** - Provides family support 24/7. Call: 1-8888-774-1361 or <http://www.military.com/support> for:
  - Financial Support
  - Education and Employment Assistance
  - Information on VA Benefits
  - Family Counseling
  - Resources in Local Communities
  - Child Care Support
- **Military ONESOURCE** - Website offers information on:
  - Counseling
  - Spouse Training, Education & Career
  - Children & Youth
  - Parenting
  - Children's Education
  - Money Matters
  - Special Needs
  - Smooth Moves (Relocation)
  - Lifelong Learning, College & Career
  - Trauma, Crisis & Violence
  - Deployment
  - Legal Matters
  - Addiction & Recovery
  - Substance Abuse
  - Other Addictions
  - Elder Care
  - Military 101
  - Transition to Civilian Life
  - Health Habits
  - Shopping & Services

To contact a Military OneSource consultant for assistance with a particular issue, please use the phone numbers or online tools below, anytime 24/7.  
Phone Numbers:

- Stateside: CONUS: 1-800-342-9647
- Overseas: \*OCONUS Universal Free Phone: 800-342-96477
- Collect from Overseas: OCONUS Collect: 484-530-5908

- En español llame al: 1-877-888-0727
- TTY/TDD: 1-800-346-9188
- Korea DSN: 550-ARMY (2769)

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>

- **Geriatrics and Extended Care** – VHA's Geriatrics and Extended Care Service advances quality care for aging and chronically ill veterans by providing policy direction for the development, coordination, and integration of geriatrics and long-term care clinical programs. Geriatrics and Extended Care's functional service lines are: Community-Based Long-Term Care, Nursing Home Care, Geriatric Care, and Residential Rehabilitation Care. Programs Include:

- Home and Community-Based Long-Term Care
- Community Residential Care
- Geriatric Research Educational Clinical Centers (GRECCs)
- Geriatric Evaluation & Management (GEM)
- Geriatric Primary Care
- VA Nursing Home Care
- Inpatient Respite
- Contract Community Nursing Home
- State Veterans Homes Program
  - Programs & Services
  - Construction Grant Program
  - Construction Grant Forms
- Alzheimer's/Dementia Care
  - Dementia Diagnosis & Management
  - Dementia Initiative Update
  - Alzheimer's/Dementia FAQ
- Pain Management
- Hospice and Palliative Care

<http://www1.va.gov/geriatricsshg/>

- **Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D)** - Research and development services that works to identify and evaluate innovative strategies that lead to accessible, high quality, cost-effective care for veterans and the nation.

<http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/>

- **MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Centers of Excellence** - Website consists of a page of information on a critical MS issue. For each issue, the page provides information such as background, an overview, VA-specific information, a recommendation, and some links to additional information.

<http://www.va.gov/ms/about.asp>

- **My HealtheVet** - The Gateway to Veteran Health and Wellness  
[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

## **Homeless**

- **Military ONESOURCE** - See listing under Health
- **Homeless Veterans** - VA offers a wide array of special programs and initiatives specifically designed to help homeless veterans live as self-sufficiently and independently as possible. In fact, the VA is the only Federal agency that provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless persons. Although limited to veterans and their dependents, VA's major homeless-specific programs constitute the largest integrated network of homeless treatment and assistance services in the country. Programs Include:
  - Outreach to those veterans living on streets and in shelters who otherwise would not seek assistance;
  - Clinical assessment and referral to needed medical treatment for physical and psychiatric disorders, including substance abuse;
  - Long-term sheltered transitional assistance, case management, and rehabilitation;
  - Employment assistance and linkage with available income supports;
  - Supported permanent housing.

<http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>

## **Mental Health Issues**

- **Military ONESOURCE** - See listing under Health
- **National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet** - Information Specific to National Guard and Reserve Personnel and Their Employers  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs\\_info\\_ngrsvspecific.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs_info_ngrsvspecific.html)
- **Mental Health Program Guidelines** - Provides current program guidelines for mental health professionals, planners, and administrators. The website: reflects changes involving current best practice in mental health care, defines levels of care, Stimulate innovative and evidence-based approaches for clinical care, reflect requirements regarding

“capacity” contained within the Veterans Healthcare Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, provides a template for individual patient treatment planning while providing definitions and a crossover to VHA’s new Decision Support System (DSS) methodology.

[http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=1094](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1094)

- **Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers** - MIRECCs are Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers established by Congress to investigate the causes of mental illness, and to evaluate both established and new treatments with the goal of bringing best practices in mental health care for veterans into the clinical settings of the VA through educational and treatment programs. Specific program information can be found on the individual MIRECC websites.  
<http://www.mirecc.med.va.gov/>
- **S.A.F.E. Program, Support And Family Education: Mental Health Facts for Families.** An 18 session curriculum for people who care about someone who has a mental illness or PTSD. Entire curriculum is available for free download on website.  
[www.ouhsc.edu/safeprogram](http://www.ouhsc.edu/safeprogram)
- **Mental Health Self-Assessment Program** - DOD sponsored anonymous mental health/alcohol screening and referral program offered to families and service members affected by deployment or mobilization, available online 24/7  
[www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org](http://www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org)
- **Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Military Personnel**  
A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/guide/GuideforMilitary.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/guide/GuideforMilitary.pdf)
- **When the Letdown Doesn't Let Up**  
National Mental Health Association  
[www.nmha.org/reunions/infoLetdown.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/reunions/infoLetdown.cfm)
- **How to Get Back to "Normal"**  
National Mental Health Association  
[www.nmha.org/reunions/infoBacktoNormal.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/reunions/infoBacktoNormal.cfm)
- **Help for Veterans with PTSD**  
A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs\\_help\\_for\\_vets.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/veterans/fs_help_for_vets.html)

## **Military**

- **Air Force** [www.airforceonesource.com](http://www.airforceonesource.com)  
User ID: air force; password: ready

- **Army**  
[www.armyonesource.com](http://www.armyonesource.com)  
User ID: army; password: onesource
- **Marine Corps** [www.mccsonesource.com](http://www.mccsonesource.com)  
User ID: marine; password: semper fi  
One Source
- **Navy** [www.navyonesource.com](http://www.navyonesource.com)  
User ID: navy; password: sailor
- **Military Resources Index**  
<http://www.military.com/Resources/Index/>
- **Fallen Patriot Fund**  
<http://www.fallenpatriotfund.org>
- **Army Wounded Warrior Program**  
<http://www.armyW2.org>

#### **Programs through DoD**

- The deployment Cycle Support Program
- Military One-Source
- Building Strong and Ready Families Program
- Strong Bonds Marriage Education Program
- P.I.C.K. – a partner program in how to choose a mate wisely
- The Wounded Warrior Project's "Coping With Combat Stress" Seminar  
The FREE seminar is open to recently returned service members (and their families) from operations conducted in direct support of the Global War on Terror. It is conducted in a two day format, incorporating both large group and separate break-out sessions for the warriors and their families, allowing specific education for veterans and family members.  
Participants are expected to attend both sessions. The seminar aims to both educate participants on identifying symptoms of combat stress and to teach various relaxation and coping techniques for such stress. Professionals from Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers/World Trade Center Healing Services will run the workshop. To register for future conferences, call Wounded Warrior Project at 646-452-5422 or email [jchwat@woundedwarriorproject.org](mailto:jchwat@woundedwarriorproject.org).

## Parenting

- **Reconnecting With Your Children**  
National Mental Health Association  
[www.nmha.org/reunions/infoChildren.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/reunions/infoChildren.cfm)
- **Healthy Parenting Initiative**  
Military HOMEFRONT (DoD)  
[http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page?\\_pageid=73,46033&\\_dad=itc&\\_schema=PORTAL&section\\_id=20.40.500.470.0.0.0.0.0&current\\_id=20.40.500.470.500.20.0.0.0](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page?_pageid=73,46033&_dad=itc&_schema=PORTAL&section_id=20.40.500.470.0.0.0.0.0&current_id=20.40.500.470.500.20.0.0.0)
- **Operation Child Care (for National Guard and Reservists)**  
<http://www.childcareaware.org/en/operationchildcare/>
- **Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)**  
[www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org)
- **Tips to support Children**  
<http://www.wnbc.com/family/2104168/detail.html>

## School Systems

- **School Connectedness: Extending Connections to Military Children**  
Military Child Initiative, John Hopkins School of Public Health  
[www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/Products/Military%20Child%20Initiative/Exec%20Summary%20R3.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/Products/Military%20Child%20Initiative/Exec%20Summary%20R3.pdf)
- **10 Tips for Administrators that Foster Connectedness to Schools**  
Military Child Initiative, John Hopkins School of Public Health  
[www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/Products/Military%20Child%20Initiative/Ten%20Tips%20for%20administrators.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/Products/Military%20Child%20Initiative/Ten%20Tips%20for%20administrators.pdf)
- **10 Tips for Parents that Foster Connectedness to Schools**  
Military Child Initiative, John Hopkins School of Public Health  
[www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/Products/Military%20Child%20Initiative/Ten%20Tips%20for%20parents.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/Products/Military%20Child%20Initiative/Ten%20Tips%20for%20parents.pdf)
- **10 Tips for Teachers that Foster Connectedness to Schools**  
Military Child Initiative, John Hopkins School of Public Health

## **Veterans' Organizations**

- **Directory of Veterans Service Organizations**  
<http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm?template=view>
- **American Legion**  
<http://www.legion.org>
- **AMVETS**  
<http://www.amvets.org>
- **Disabled American Veterans**  
<http://www.dav.org>
- **Iraq War Veterans Organization**  
[www.iraqwarveterans.org/index.html](http://www.iraqwarveterans.org/index.html)
- **Jewish War Veterans**  
<http://www.jwv.org/>
- **Military Order of the Purple Heart**  
<http://purpleheart.org>
- **Paralyzed Veterans of American**  
<http://pva.org>
- **National Veterans Organization**  
<http://nvo.org>
- **Salute America's Heroes**  
[www.saluteheros.org/redign](http://www.saluteheros.org/redign)
- **Iraq War Veterans Organization**  
[www.iraqwarveterans.org/ptsd.htm](http://www.iraqwarveterans.org/ptsd.htm)

## **Women & Minority Veterans**

- **Program & Initiatives for Women Veterans** - VHA has designed services and programs to be responsive to the gender-specific needs of women veterans. VA offers comprehensive healthcare services for women including: counseling for sexual trauma; Pap smears, mammography and general reproductive health care; and designated Women Veterans Program Managers at most VA medical centers and Women Veteran Coordinators at each Regional Office.  
<http://www.va.gov>
- **Center for Minority Veterans** -The Center for Minority Veterans is part of the Office of the Secretary. The Center assists eligible veterans in their efforts to receive benefits and services from VA. The Center acts only as a mediator and facilitator -- As such the Center does not process claims, handle equal employment complaints, or employee relation problems. The Center is dedicated to ensuring that all veterans are aware of benefits, services, and programs offered by the VA  
<http://www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans>

## Youth

- **Guard Family Youth Website**  
[www.guardfamilyyouth.org](http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org)
- **Deployment Kids**  
[www.deploymentkids.com](http://www.deploymentkids.com)
- **DOD's Military Student Program: The Military Child in Transition and Deployment**  
[www.militarystudent.dod.mil/](http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/)

# Appendix

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Washington, DC 20420

VHA DIRECTIVE 2005-020

June 2, 2005

## DETERMINING COMBAT VETERAN ELIGIBILITY

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy for determining eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care benefits for recently discharged veterans who served in a theater of combat operations or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities.

## 2. BACKGROUND

a. VA has the authority to provide medical care and other medical services to combat veterans even in the absence of proof of service connection. Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 1710(e)(1)(D), states that a veteran who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations (as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense) during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, is eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness, even if there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that such condition is attributable to such service.

b. "Hostilities" is defined as conflict in which the members of the Armed Forces are subjected to danger comparable to the danger to which members of the Armed Forces have been subjected in a theater of combat operations during a period of war. To determine whether a period of hostilities is within the scope of this special authority, VA relies upon the same citation and criterion used to determine eligibility for VA Readjustment Counseling Service contained in 38 U.S.C., Section 1712A(a)(2)(B), as it applies to veterans in service after November 11, 1998. More specifically, criteria used to determine whether a veteran's service meets the qualifications required by statute include:

(1) Receipt of an expeditionary medal or other Department of Defense (DoD) authorized combat related medal;

(2) Service in a location designated by an Executive Order as a combat zone;

(3) Service in a qualified hazardous duty area as defined by Federal statute that deems such service by a member of the Armed Forces to be the equivalent of service in a combat zone for pay or a tax-related purpose;

(4) Receipt of DoD Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger pay for serving in the area subject to hostilities; or

(5) Other factors as may be defined in policy and regulation by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

**THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2010**

**NOTE:** A certificate of award, or presentation of a medal, in and of itself, will not suffice for VA health care eligibility verification purposes without the submission of supporting documentation (such as DD 214, Proof of receipt of Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay, proof of exemption of Federal tax status for Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay after November 11, 1998), other military service records or orders indicating combat service.

c. National Guard and Reserve personnel who were activated and who served in combat support or direct combat operations during a period of war after the Gulf War, or in combat support or direct combat against a hostile force after November 11, 1998, may also be eligible for the combat related health care benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1710(e)(1)(D). To qualify, they must meet certain requirements, which essentially satisfy the definitions of “veteran” (see 38 U.S.C. 101 (2)), and “active duty”.

(1) A reservist must have served on “active duty” as defined in 38, U.S. C.101(21) and have met the “minimum active duty” service requirement as defined in 38 U.S.C. 5303A or be exempt from the “minimum active duty” requirement.

(2) National Guard members must meet those same requirements and must also have been ordered to active duty by Federal declaration.

d. Attachment A contains the locations and periods of service that qualify as theaters of combat and should be used to determine eligibility as a combat veteran.

**NOTE:** These criteria are updated as necessary.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy, in accordance with 38 U.S.C. Section 1710(e)(1)(D), that veterans who served in combat support or direct combat operations during a period of war after the Gulf War, or in combat support or direct combat against a hostile force after November 11, 1998, are to be provided hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness potentially related to their service in the combat theater for a 2-year period following separation from military service, even if there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that such condition is attributable to such service. **NOTE:** Veterans under this authority may be enrolled as priority category 6 and are eligible for the full medical benefits package; as such they are not subject to co-payments for care potentially related to their combat service.

#### **4. ACTION**

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health has designated the Chief Business Officer (CBO), as the lead VHA officer for establishing policy in determining veterans' eligibility for health benefits

b. **Chief Business Officer (16)**

(1) The Chief Business Officer (CBO), or designee, in consultation with the Public Health and Environmental Hazards Office (13), and the Readjustment Counseling Service (15), determines locations, dates of service, and other criteria that are used to identify service in theaters of combat or subject to hostilities.

(2) The CBO is responsible for providing guidance relating to the evidence or documentation needed to determine an individual veteran's eligibility for these combat-related health benefits. **NOTE:** *Specific locations that have been designated as theaters of combat or areas subject to hostilities qualifying for combat veteran status are provided in Attachment A and will be updated as changes in combat designations occur.*

c. **Medical Facility Director.** Each medical facility Director is responsible for ensuring that

(1) Facility staff involved in the eligibility process and staff involved in the provision of health care services are also provided guidance for establishing combat veteran eligibility and providing appropriate service to those veterans. Recently discharged combat veterans need to be asked to complete the applicable financial assessments (means test or medication co-payment tests) to determine if they qualify for a higher enrollment priority assignment, whether they will be charged co-payments for care and medication provided for treatment or non-combat related conditions, as well as their potential eligibility for beneficiary travel.

(2) Intake staff are trained to clearly articulate to combat veterans the benefits of providing their income information to assess their eligibility for VA medical benefits. If the combat veteran declines to provide their income information, the combat veteran must agree to make appropriate co-payments for care that is clearly not related to their combat service.

(a) Evidence or documentation that may be accepted as an individual veteran's proof of service in a combat area include: **NOTE:** *Only one is required.*

1. Notations on the DD 214 of service in a designated combat theater of operations;
2. Receipt of the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Kosovo Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (does not include Global War on Terrorism Service Medal); Southwest Asia Campaign Medal; or other DoD authorized combat related medal;
3. Proof of receipt of Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay (commonly referred to as "combat pay") after November 11, 1998; and
4. Proof of exemption of Federal tax status for Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay after November 11, 1998.

**NOTE:** *Other evidence may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.*

(b) The minimum active duty service requirement is the shorter of the following two periods:

1. The full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty, or
2. Twenty-four months of continuous active duty.

**NOTE:** *There remain categories of veterans who are expressly excluded by statute from the minimum active duty service requirement; e.g., veterans who were discharged or released from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, those discharged or released from active duty under an early out or hardship discharge, etc.*

## **5. REFERENCES**

a. Patient Referral Eligibility For VA War-Related Illnesses and Injury Study Centers, dated September 23, 2002.

b. Title 38 U.S.C., Sections 101(2) and 101(21), 1710, 1712A, and 5303A.

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief Business Office (16) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions are to be addressed to Business Policy at 202-254-0406.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 2004-017, Establishing Combat Veteran Eligibility. This VHA Directive expires June 30, 2010.

S/Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, MSHA, FACP  
Under Secretary for Health

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 6/6/05  
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 – E-mailed 6/6/05

## ATTACHMENT A

### COMBAT VETERAN ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION TABLE COMBAT ZONES, HOSTILITIES and MEDALS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must use and refer to the Department of Defense (DoD) website <http://www.defenselink.mil/comptroller> to maintain the listing of designated hostile fire or imminent danger pay areas. Although DoD Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger pay existed prior to November 11, 1998, only proof of such pay on or after November 11, 1998, is acceptable. **NOTE:** *The DoD website, the definitions, and the table provided in this Attachment should assist in the determination of combat veteran eligibility.*

#### 1. Definitions

a. **Combat Service.** Veterans who served in combat during a period of war after the Gulf War, or against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, qualify, and are eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for 2 years after discharge from the military for any illness.

(1) Co-payments may be charged for those conditions which the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) finds resulted from a cause other than such combat service.

(2) Combat zones are designated by an Executive Order from the President as areas in which the United States (U.S.) Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat. An area usually becomes a combat zone and ceases to be a combat zone on the dates the President designates by Executive Order.

b. **Hostilities or Imminent Danger Pay.** Hostile fire pay is defined as pay to anyone exposed to hostile fire or mine explosion, while imminent danger pay is paid to anyone on duty outside the United States area who is subject to physical harm or imminent danger due to wartime conditions, terrorism, civil insurrection, or civil war.

c. **Medals.** Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (does not include Global War on Terrorism Medal); Kosovo Campaign Medal; Southwest Asia Campaign Medal; and other DoD authorized combat related medals.

**NOTE:** *This listing is current as of the date of publication of this directive. For the most current listing see <http://www.defenselink.mil/comptroller/fmr/07a/07A10.pdf>*

#### 2. Table Designating Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay Areas after November 11, 1998

<b>AREA</b>	<b>INCLUDES</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>TERMINATED</b>
Adriatic Sea	Sea area and airspace	Apr 12, 1999	Sep 15, 1999
Afghanistan	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Albania	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	Mar 31, 2002
Algeria	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Angola	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Arabian Peninsula *	Locations and airspace above: Persian Gulf and land area of Saudi Arabia	Nov 11, 1998	
Arabian Peninsula *	Surface area of the following sea boundaries: Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea	Sep 19, 2001	
Azerbaijan	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Bahrain	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Bosnia- Herzegovina	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Burundi	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Cambodia	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	Oct 31, 2001
Colombia	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	Land area	Feb 27, 2003	
Croatia	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Djibouti	Land area	July 31, 2002	
East Timor	Land area	Sept 30, 1999	Oct 28, 1999
	Land area and airspace	Oct 29, 1999	Oct 31, 2001
	Land area	Nov 1, 2001	
Egypt	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
El Salvador	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	May 31, 2001
Eritrea	Land	July 31, 2002	
Ethiopia	Land area	Sep 13, 1999	
Georgia, Republic of	Land area	July 31, 2002	
Greece **	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Haiti	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Hungary **	Land area	May 31, 1999	Sep 15, 1999
Indonesia	Land area	Oct 31, 2001	
Ionian Sea **	Sea area and airspace	Apr 12, 1999	Sep 15, 1999
Iran	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Iraq	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	

*\*Arabian Peninsula and adjacent sea areas that include Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.*

*\*\*For detailed specific information regarding designated hostile fire or imminent danger pay areas for these countries, refer to the website citation.*

<b>AREA</b>	<b>INCLUDES</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>TERMINATED</b>
Israel	Land area	Jan 31, 2002	
Italy **	Land area	May 31, 1999	Sep 15,1999
Jordan	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Kenya	Land area	July 31, 2002	
Kuwait	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Kyrgyzstan	Land area	Sep 19, 2001	
Lebanon	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Liberia	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Macedonia	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Malaysia	Land area	Oct 31, 2001	
Mediterranean Sea	Sea area	Apr 11, 2003	July 31, 2003
Montenegro	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Oman	Land area	Sep 19, 2001	
Pakistan	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Peru	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	Dec 31, 2001
Philippines	Land area	Oct 31, 2001	
Qatar	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Rwanda	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Saudi Arabia	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Serbia	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Sierra Leone	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Somalia	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Sudan	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Syria	Land area	July 31, 2003	
Tajikistan	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	
Turkey **	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Uganda	Land area	Jan 19, 2000	
United Arab Emirates	Land area	Sep 19, 2001	
Uzbekistan	Land area	Sep 19, 2001	
Yemen	Land area	May 25, 1999	
Yugoslavia	Land area and airspace	Nov 11, 1998	
Zaire	Land area	Nov 11, 1998	

*\*Arabian Peninsula and adjacent sea areas that include Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.*

*\*\*For detailed specific information regarding designated hostile fire or imminent danger pay areas for these countries, refer to the website citation.*

**VA HERO MILES APPLICATION**

FROM: OIF/OEF Patient

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**RANK AND NAME OF OIF/OEF PATIENT** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of VA Medical Center)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City and State)

THRU: **Primary Physician:** *(Please complete)* - Service Member is being treated as an inpatient or outpatient lodger due to service in Iraq or Afghanistan or other combat theater (please circle one).

Estimated remaining length of treatment at this medical center is:

Under 15 days

15-30 days

Over 30 days

I certify the above information to be correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Primary Physician

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name & Title of Primary Physician

Tel: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Physician's Phone Number & Fax Number

THRU: **VA Social Worker** *(Please complete)*

I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of OIF/OEF Patient) has signed VA Form 10-5345, "Release For and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information" authorizing release of necessary health information to the Fisher House Foundation to process the request for airline tickets. ***(Fax completed application to the Director, Social Work Service, VA Central Office at 202-273-8385.)***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Social Worker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name & Title of Social Worker

Tel: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Worker's Phone Number & Fax Number

THRU: **Director, Social Work Service, VA Central Office**

Recommend Approval/Disapproval

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Director of Social Work Service      Date

TO: Fisher House Foundation

**Ticket Request Section:** You can **either** request a ticket for yourself or for family/close friends.

**SERVICE MEMBER TRAVEL - ORDINARY LEAVE (5 OR MORE DAYS):** I would like a complimentary round trip airline ticket for myself for a non-government funded trip from \_\_\_\_\_ (name of VA medical center) to \_\_\_\_\_ (airport city & state). Contact phone number (mobile phone preferred): (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_

**Service member must attach a copy of the document approving the leave** (DA Form 31 for Army or Form 1050 for USMC).

Earliest date for outbound travel is: \_\_\_\_\_.

Latest date for return travel is: \_\_\_\_\_.

Service Member's Name (Last, First): \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY TRAVEL:** I would like a complimentary round trip airline ticket(s) for the following members of my family or friend to visit me while I am a patient at

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of VA medical center)

\_\_\_\_\_ (city/state)

Please PRINT and use legal name that will match government issued identification and provide a current mailing address & phone number:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City/State/Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) (daytime phone number)

Mobile Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail (PRINT CAREFULLY): \_\_\_\_\_

Round Trip travel from (airport) \_\_\_\_\_ to (airport) \_\_\_\_\_

Earliest date for travel to commence: \_\_\_\_\_

Latest date for return travel: \_\_\_\_\_

Special considerations (i.e. aisle/window, handicap, infant sharing seat, etc.)

If passenger is 18 years or young, please include date of birth. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City/State/Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) (daytime phone number)

Mobile Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail (PRINT CAREFULLY): \_\_\_\_\_

Round Trip travel from (airport) \_\_\_\_\_ to (airport) \_\_\_\_\_

Earliest date for travel to commence: \_\_\_\_\_

Latest date for return travel: \_\_\_\_\_

Special considerations (i.e. aisle/window, handicap, infant sharing seat, etc.)  
If passenger is 18 years or young, please include date of birth.

\_\_\_\_\_

If there are more than two family members, please reproduce this page and complete the form for the additional names.

Service Member's Name (Last, First): \_\_\_\_\_

There are no provisions for assistance with local travel, overnight accommodations, meals or other expenses. If travel is to the Washington, D. C. area, please read the following:

IN MAKING THIS REQUEST, I SPECIFICALLY ACKNOWLEDGE WASHINGTON, DC, IS A HIGH COST LIVING AREA AND THAT NEITHER THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY NOR THE FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION WILL PROVIDE FOR ANY ASSISTANCE , FINANCIAL OR OTHERWISE, IN ANY ASPECT OF TRAVEL RELATED TO THIS REQUEST, INCLUDING HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS OR MEALS. IN SIGNING BELOW I CERTIFY THAT I OR MY FAMILY WILL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AND PAY FOR ALL ASSOCIATED COSTS AND WILL SEEK NO ASSISTANCE FROM THE FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION OR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY.

FOR TRAVEL BY A HOSPITALIZED SERVICE MEMBER, THIS REQUEST MUST INCLUDE A COPY OF AN APPROVED LEAVE. FREE AIRLINE TICKETS CAN NOT BE USED FOR TRAVEL WHILE ON PASS.

**Signature of OIF/OEF Patient:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Rank & Service:

\_\_\_\_\_

Room/Ward: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number where you can be contacted: (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_

Email (PRINT CAREFULLY): \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate local contact: \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g., Social Worker) Name & Phone number

Action by Fisher House Foundation:

Ticket(s) Issued (Airline/Record Locator or Ticket Number):

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Completed form must be faxed to Fisher House Foundation at (301) 294-8562 during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST). Foundation office is closed on weekends and federal holidays. Messages left on voice mail are normally responded to during business hours.

Fisher House Operations Office: 1401 Rockville Pike, Suite 600, Rockville, Maryland 20852  
Tel: 301.294-8560 Fax: 301.294-8562 Toll Free: 888.294-8560

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