



## PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mokie Porter (301) 996-0901

### **VVA Applauds the VA for Adding Rare Cancers as Presumed Conditions; Calls for the Addition of Widespread Respiratory Diseases/ Cancers**

(Washington, D.C.) – “Vietnam Veterans of America is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs for its addition of nine very rare respiratory cancers as presumptive conditions for the purpose of veterans’ disability claims,” said VVA National President Jack McManus. “These newly proposed conditions are presumed to result from exposure to particulate matter, such as the smoke from burning Kuwaiti oil well fires during the 1991 Gulf War and open-air burn pits used for decades by the military.”

“This action by the VA is a small, first step in addressing the serious health issues impacting countless toxic-wounded veterans, including those exposed while deployed overseas or while serving on military bases here at home,” said McManus.

“We look forward to seeing additional ‘toxic exposure-presumptive conditions’ added next—conditions which affect a large number of toxic-wounded veterans, including the more prevalent forms of diseases, to include brain cancer, constrictive bronchiolitis, pulmonary fibrosis, sarcoidosis, and neurodegenerative diseases, to name a few,” said McManus.

McManus cited hypertension as an example: “For decades, hypertension has been recommended for service connection to exposure to herbicides. The Ranch Hand Study in 2006, along with the Health Status of Army Chemical Corps Study, supported that association. In 2016, the VA published its own study of Army Chemical Corps personnel exposed to herbicides, which found that occupational herbicide exposure history and Vietnam-service status were significantly associated with hypertension risk. Yet, our aging Vietnam veterans continue to wait for the VA to acknowledge the association as a presumptive condition.”

“VVA is fully invested in ensuring our nation’s veterans who have been impacted by toxic exposures are fully represented,” said McManus. “We will not stand by silently and allow any veteran, no matter their theater of war, to endure the obfuscation and poor treatment that we have had to endure since our return home.”

*Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”*