# Ukrainian American Veterans Conference

## Overview of the VA's Disability Compensation Program

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# Agenda

- Overview of VA Benefits and Services
- Disability Compensation Program
- Agent Orange Presumptions
- Blue Water Navy benefits

# VA Benefits in Brief



Diagram: "VETERAN & FAMILY" at the center, surrounded by: Health Care, Burial & Memorial, Loan Guaranty, Pension, Compensation, Life Insurance, Education & Training.

# Overview of Compensation Program

- <u>Purpose</u>: Provide compensation for *disabilities* incurred in, or aggravated by, military service (38 U.S.C. § 1110)
- Benefits based on scale from 10 to 100%
- Tax-free
- Special Monthly Compensation – higher levels of disability
- Range of monthly payments (for single Veteran)
  - $142.29 (10% disabling)
  - $3,106.04 (100% disabling)
  - $8,889.08 for Special Monthly Compensation "R2" level (highest level of disability, i.e., loss of multiple limbs)

# Who We Serve (end of FY 2020)

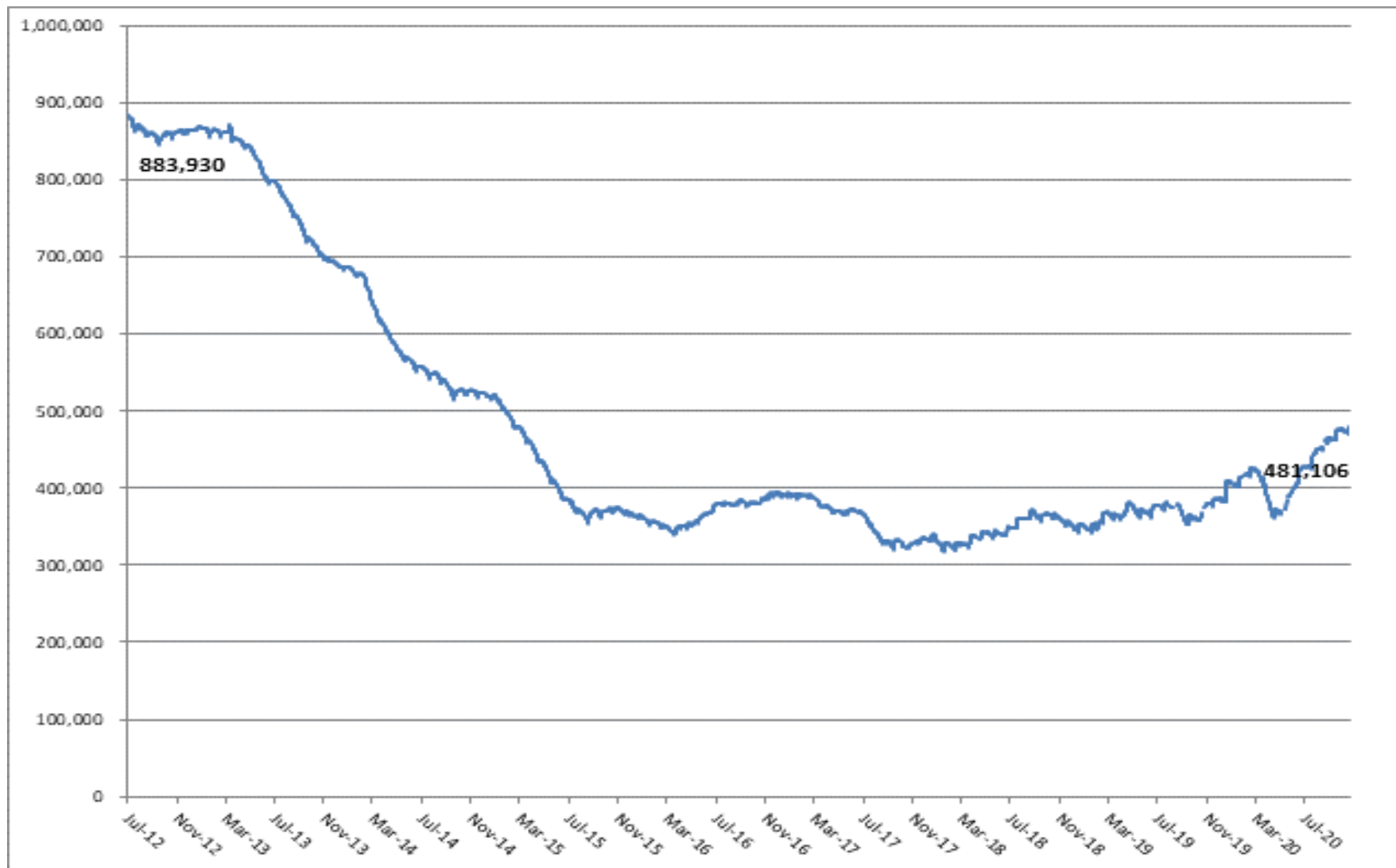| Period of service | Number of Veterans | Estimated annual total payments | Estimated annual average individual payment |
|---|---|---|---|
| World War II | 32,076 | $.4 Billion | $13,975 |
| Korean Conflict | 91,238 | $1.2 Billion | $12,859 |
| Vietnam Era | 1,422,097 | $28 Billion | $19,684 |
| Gulf War Era | 2,563,368 | $51 Billion | $18,810 |
| Peacetime Era | 813,319 | $11 Billion | $13,025 |
| Total | 5,081,692 | $91 Billion | $17,991 |

# Metrics (nationwide)

**Current**

- Pending Claims – 481,106
  - Backlog: 201,493
- Average days to complete (ADC) – 108 days
- Accuracy – 12-month Issue Level – 96%

**FY 2020 Performance**

- ADC – 93 days
- # Claims completed – 1.4 million

# Pending Claims Nationwide

# Service Connection

- Three components to prove "direct" service connection
  - Current Disability
  - Event, injury, or disease in service, and
  - Link between current disability and service

- Presumptions lessen the burden to prove service connection
  - "Presumption of Exposure" satisfies required **event** in service.
    - For example, VA presumes exposure to Agent Orange if Veteran served in Vietnam
  - "Presumption of Service Connection" satisfies **link** between current disability and event in service
    - For example, if a Vietnam Veteran has prostate cancer, VA presumes condition is related to service in Vietnam

# Agent Orange Presumptions

## 14 Presumptive Health Conditions for Agent Orange Exposure

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or other acne-form disease consistent with chloracne
- Type II Diabetes (also known as Type II diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes)
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin's disease
- All Chronic B-Cell Leukemias (including, but not limited to, hairy-cell leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia)
- Multiple myeloma

- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Early-onset peripheral neuropathy
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Soft-tissue Sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)
- Ischemic heart disease
- Parkinson's disease

# Blue Water Navy

- **The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019**, signed into law on June 25, 2019. The law went into effect January 1, 2020.
- Expands "presumption of exposure" to  Agent Orange for Veterans who served in the offshore waters of Vietnam.
- "Offshore Waters" - serving on a vessel within 12-nautical miles seaward from a demarcation line during the timeframe of January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975.
- Bottom Line - BWN Veterans can now receive compensation on a presumptive basis for the 14 Agent Orange-related conditions.

# Potential Claims Population

- There are between 420,000 and 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans who may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

- The table shows the estimated number of BWN claims expected over 10 years.

| VBA 10 Year Claims Projections | |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Year | Claim Estimate |
| FY20 | 88,262 |
| FY21 | 59,349 |
| FY22 | 30,192 |
| FY23 | 30,137 |
| FY24 | 30,002 |
| FY25 | 29,790 |
| FY26 | 29,502 |
| FY27 | 29,126 |
| FY28 | 28,641 |
| FY29 | 28,040 |
| **Total** | **383,041** |

# Blue Water Navy Claims Data

## *As of November 1, 2020*

- Total Claims Received – 73K

- Total Claims Completed – 37K

- Total Claims Granted Benefits – 26K (71%)

- Pay Out Amount = $700 million

# Questions?