

Service Office Article

Hello from your Veterans Service Office

January 2023

Your Service Office at the VA Portland Regional Office is now fully open for in-person appointments, including walk-ins. Priority is given to veterans and clients with appointments. The Service Office open between 0800 and 1600 Monday through Friday. To schedule an appointment (in-person, virtual, or by phone, please call (503) 412-4757 or email vfw.vbaport@va.gov.

Personnel Changes to your Service Office

We are sad to see Antoinette (Annie) Lindsay leave the Service Office. While she has left, she did not go far and was hired by the VA as a Rater. Good luck, Annie.

In addition, Enso will soon leave us to also take a rater position with the VA. We have hired a new VSO. Osvaldo (Ozzie) Sixtos comes to us from the California VFW San Diego Service Office. Ozzie started as an Administrative Assistant and was training to become a Veterans Service Officer. Ozzie is doing a great job, so please join me in welcoming him to your Service Office

With the loss of Annie, we are now seeking a new Administrative Assistant. Applications can be found at <http://vfwor.org>. Please mail completed applications with a resume' to the Department State Office Attn: Service Office.

PACT Act

The PACT Act was signed into law 10 August 2022. Beginning in Mid-August, the VA began clearing those claims that could be decided without further consideration. On 2 January, they began processing all PACT Act claims. While the PACT Act, as written, was to become effective in stages, the VA decided to consider all claims immediately. The PACT Act has added three major areas of consideration: Ionizing Radiation (including Spain, Johnston Atoll, and Greenland), Vietnam (Including parts of Cambodia and Laos, Guam, and Thailand Air Bases), and the Burn Pit Toxic Exposure (including the Persian Gulf after 2 August 1990 and Afghanistan after 11 September 2001). For the full list, please see <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/> .

Do you need help? Please go to <http://pactactinfo.org> .

Claims Sharks

Have you received unsolicited calls about your VA Benefits? Have you been promised 100% VA Compensation? You may have been called by a Claims Shark, that is un-accredited representatives and companies fishing to steal your benefits. Check them out at <https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>

VA Healthcare Open Enrollment:

Did you serve in a deployed combat zone and discharged between 2 August 1990 and 31 October 2013? If so, did you take advantage of the 3 years of free VA Healthcare? If you served and did not take advantage of this benefit, you may still qualify. The PACT Act extends the free VA Healthcare from 5 to 10 years. You can enroll between now and 31 October 2023 for your 10 years of free VA Healthcare. If you were discharged after 1 January 2013, you may still be in your 10 years period. To take advantage of this benefit, take a copy of your DD-214 and a completed VA Form 10-10 to any VA medical facility, or contact the Service Office.

Camp Lejeune Contaminated Water Class Action Suit.

There is a lot of media concerning the Camp Lejeune Contaminated Water issues. If you served at least 30 days on Camp Lejeune between August 1953 and December 1987, and have a diagnosed condition listed at <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/camp-lejeune-water-contamination/>, you may be intitled to compensation.

However, if you contact law firm to file as part of the Class Action Suit you should be aware the courts have limited lawyer fees to 50% of any retroactive benefit (the normal cap for Accredited Law Firms is 20%.) Once you sign a contract with any law firm (accredited or not) the VFW can no longer assist you with any claims. In addition. We do not know yet the ramifications to any current or future VA Benefits. Feel free to check with the Service Office for updated information.

VA White House VA Veterans Experience Hotline

The VA "White Hose VA Hotline" became active 3 November 2022. (800) MyVA411 or (800) 698-2411

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