

## **Agent Orange: The Wait for Justice Continues**

Nov 2 – “It has been more than a year and half since the March 10, 2016, release of the National Academy of Medicine’s Veterans and Agent Orange Update 2014, the tenth biennial evaluation of relevant scientific studies on Agent Orange and other herbicides used during military operations in Vietnam,” said John Rowan, VVA National President. “The Agent Orange Act of 1991 called for a decision by the Secretary no later than 60 days after receiving the IOM’s report and another 60 days after the Secretary’s decision to issue proposed regulations setting forth his determination.

“While we are disappointed with VA Secretary Shulkin’s delay in announcing his intentions, we are heartened by his November 1 statement that he is ‘considering possible new presumptive conditions’ and by his expressed commitment to work with the administration on the next steps in the process,” said Rowan. “Our Vietnam veterans have been very patient, but as each day passes, they are growing rapidly less so. We are losing over 500 a day, many of them from conditions associated with exposure to dioxin. We must take care of our Vietnam veterans now.”

The National Academy of Medicine review called for the upgrading of the status of bladder cancer and hypothyroidism to the limited/suggestive category of association; it clarified that individuals with parkinson’s-like symptoms without other known etiology should be included in the presumption for parkinson’s disease; and it firmly supported the VAO’s prior decisions--but not yet recognized by VA as presumptive conditions, hypertension and stroke.”

“We call upon Secretary Shulkin to delay no further and to act on the National Academy of Science’s findings by adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, parkinson’s-like symptoms, hypertension, and stroke to the service-connected, presumptive list for those who served in Vietnam and elsewhere in the Southeast Asia Theater of operations,” said Rowan.

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