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Mr. John Rossie

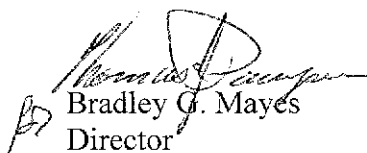
inside the country, but do not include open deep-water coastal ports and harbors where there is no evidence of herbicide use. Naval vessels temporarily anchored in the coastal ports of Da Nang, Cam Ranh Bay, Vung Tau, or any other location along the open coastline of Vietnam, are not considered by VA to be within the country itself or on its inland waterways, for purposes of presumptive claims adjudication.

USS Ingersoll veterans who served aboard ship during October 1965 received the presumption of herbicide exposure because documentary evidence showed that the ship traveled seven miles up the Saigon River of Vietnam to conduct a fire support mission at that time. This placed the USS Ingersoll on the inland waterways. Because this was a relatively unusual river mission for a vessel as large as a destroyer, confirmation was obtained by reviewing the ship's deck logs for October 1965 at the National Archives and Records Administration. Most inland waterway operations were conducted by small river patrol or swift boats designed for shallow water missions. Any veteran who served on one of these small boats in Vietnam will receive the presumption of herbicide exposure. The presumption of exposure will also be granted to those veterans who served on larger vessels, such as the USS Ingersoll, when evidence shows that the vessel conducted operations on the inland waterways.

The court approved stay on adjudication of blue water claims that was in effect pending final resolution of the *Haas* case has been lifted. The claims that were affected will now be adjudicated. If the evidence shows that a veteran was either on a vessel conducting operations on the inland waterways of Vietnam, or performed off ship duties on the ground in Vietnam, that veteran will receive the presumption of herbicide exposure. All other claims related to herbicide exposure will be adjudicated on a direct basis, with some objective evidence of exposure required to support the claim.

I hope this information is helpful and adequately explains VA procedures related to adjudication of claims from Navy and Coast Guard veterans of the Vietnam Era.

Sincerely,


Bradley G. Mayes
Director

Compensation and Pension Service