



Anoka County

MINNESOTA

Veteran Services

Government Center
2100 3rd Avenue, Suite 216
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 324-4500

VETERANS ADVOCATE

Spring 2019

FEDERAL CIRCUIT RULES IN FAVOR OF "BLUE WATER" NAVY VETERANS

On January 29, 2019, the Federal Circuit, in a decision *Procopio v. Wilkie*, overturned their previous decision in *Haas v. Peake*, restoring presumptive service connected compensation for herbicide related conditions to Blue Water Navy Veterans who served within the territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

This means that any veteran who can show they served within the 12 nautical miles of the landmass of Vietnam during the presumptive period (January 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975), is once again eligible for presumptive service connection for any of the herbicide-related diseases listed in 38 CFR 3.309(e).

The court reasoned that Congress intended in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to include veterans who served in the territorial seas in the definition of "service in the Republic of Vietnam", so the *Nehmer* effective date rules should also apply to these veterans. The court stated that their colleagues on the court in 2007 failed to consider the applicable law and had made the wrong decision over a decade ago in *Haas*.

If this ruling stands, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans will be entitled to receive the same presumptive compensation benefits, DIC, health care and ancillary benefits just as "boots on the ground" Vietnam Veterans.

However, VA may choose to appeal to the Supreme Court. In that case, all such cases should be "stayed" at the VA, meaning they will not be worked on or decided until the Supreme Court declines to review or makes a decision.

Any veterans who meet the criteria of serving within the 12 nautical miles of the landmass of Vietnam during the presumptive period and are currently diagnosed with a disability listed on the VA's "diseases associated with Agent Orange" list should visit Anoka County Veteran Services for assistance in filing a claim.

MACV DROP-IN LEGAL CLINIC FOR VETERANS

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) hosts free walk-in legal clinics staffed by legal services representatives and pro bono attorneys to assist with legal issues about housing, employment, benefits, expungement, debt collection, family law and more. Individuals should bring any and all relevant legal forms and documents to the clinic.

Dates for the legal clinics in Anoka for 2019 are:

Thursday, March 7 from 9 AM-3 PM

Thursday, June 13 from 9 AM-3 PM

Thursday, September 5 from 9 AM-3 PM

Thursday, December 5 from 9 AM- 3PM

**Anoka County Government Center - Room 237
2100 3rd Avenue
Anoka, MN 55303**

2019 NACVSO TRAINING CONFERENCE

The Anoka County Veteran Services Office will be operating at reduced strength the week of June 3-7 while our Veteran Service Officers attend the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers Training Conference.

This training ensures that our Veteran Service Officers have the most up-to-date information to best serve our Veterans, Survivors and Dependents.

During our absence, there will be a service officer on hand from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs/American Legion Claims Office to serve any urgent needs of our clients. Wait times may be longer than normal during that week. Our office will return to normal operations on Monday, June 10. We appreciate your patience during this time.

ANOKA COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

The purpose of the Anoka County Veterans Advisory Board is to facilitate communication between Veteran Service Organizations, their members and the Anoka County Veteran Services Office.

We ask all Veteran Service Organizations to have at least 1 member in attendance at the quarterly Veterans Advisory Board Meetings, but having more than 1 member is welcomed.

Having an open line of communication between our office and local service organizations moving forward will ensure that Anoka County Veterans and their families will be served to the highest level possible.

The next meeting will be held:

**** (NEW TIME) Monday, March 18, 2019 - 1:00 PM****

**Anoka American Legion Post 102
400 W. Main Street
Anoka, MN 55303**

If you have questions please contact the Anoka County Veteran Services Office at [veterans@](mailto:veterans@co.anoka.mn.us)

co.anoka.mn.us or 763-324-4500. We hope to see you at the next meeting.

2019 ANOKA COUNTY HOLIDAYS

The Anoka County Veteran Services Office will be closed on the following dates in observance of Federal Holidays:

February 18, 2019 (President's Day)

May 27, 2019 (Memorial Day)

July 4, 2019 (Independence Day)

September 2, 2019 (Labor Day)

November 11, 2019 (Veterans Day)

November 28, 29, 2019 (Thanksgiving)

December 24, 2019 NOON (Christmas Eve)

December 25, 2019 (Christmas)

ABOUT ANOKA COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES

Anoka County Veteran Services provides professional, caring and quality assistance to veterans and their dependents in obtaining benefits through county, state and federal programs. As advocates, we work with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations to ensure that our veterans and their dependents receive the benefits they have earned through military service.

When visiting the Anoka County Veteran Services Office you will be referred to a service officer for assistance. Our County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO's) are highly trained, professional advocates that share an understanding of the challenges our veterans and their dependents face. Our CVSO's attend the most current training on the extent, the meaning and the application of laws that have been passed by the U.S. Congress in the interests of veterans and their dependents. They also know the rules and regulations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to clarify and implement those laws. Our CVSO's will apply specialized knowledge in the best way suited to the needs of every individual veteran or other beneficiary who visit our office for assistance.

We are located in Downtown Anoka on the 2nd floor of the Anoka County Government Center in Room 216. We are a walk-in office and do not accept appointments.

Our hours of operation are:

Monday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Tuesday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Wednesday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Thursday - 8:00am - 4:00pm
Friday - 8:00am - 3:00pm
Closed on all Federal Holidays

Phone: (763) 324-4500

Fax: (763) 324-1040

Email: veterans@co.anoka.mn.us

Website: www.anokacounty.us/veterans

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.



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