

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

This agency assists hundreds of thousands of veterans every year in a number of different ways, mostly with service-related disabilities and health issues. Some of our classmates have already had dealings with the VA, and most seem pleased with the care they received. The VA website is easy to use and navigate. To access it, go to: va.gov

Service Related Disabilities

Veterans suffering from service-related injuries or health issues may be eligible for benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Physical injuries while serving are an easy call, but the VA assists with ailments that sometimes surface many years later. For example, Agent Orange was a tactical herbicide the U.S. military used to clear leaves and vegetation for military operations during the Vietnam War era. The Veteran's Administration has deemed a number of diseases, whose symptoms can sometimes appear decades after exposure to the chemical, to be related to Agent Orange exposure. It recognizes these conditions as "presumptive," meaning that just having been in Vietnam or areas of South Korea makes soldiers eligible for disability benefits. The most common of these diseases are heart disease, prostate cancer and diabetes, and the VA recently (April 2021) announced that they were adding hypothyroidism, bladder cancer and Parkinson's disease to their list of Agent Orange presumptive diseases. For the latest complete list of presumptive diseases and guidance for making a claim, go to "hazardous-materials-exposure" section of VA website: va.gov/disability/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange

PTSD Treatment

Similarly, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms sometimes occur many years after the stressful incidents that caused them. If you're a veteran, it's never too late to get help for PTSD. Getting counseling or treatment can help you manage your symptoms and keep them from getting worse. The VA's National Center for PTSD is the world leader in PTSD research, education, and treatment. Find out how to access PTSD health services through VA website's PTSD page: va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/ptsd

Veteran's Crisis Line

If you need advice or help, the VA's crisis line is manned day and night, twenty-four/seven, by our caring, qualified responders, many of whom are Veterans themselves. All conversations are strictly confidential: 800-273-8255

Burial in a VA National Cemetery

A veteran and his/her spouse are eligible to be buried in one of the country's 138 National Cemeteries that still have space available. The plot and headstone are provided gratis. Military funeral honors provided by the Department of Defense may be requested.