



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

AUG 29 2014

The Honorable Reid J. Ribble
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressman Ribble:

I am responding to the July 16, 2014, inquiry you submitted on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Wayne Damp. This inquiry requested that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) add April 1965 to those dates already specified for the USS Canberra (CAG-2) on the list of ships associated with service in the waters of Vietnam and potential Agent Orange exposure. Mr. Damp submitted deck logs in support of this request.

VA regulations provide for a presumption of Agent Orange exposure for Veterans with duty or visitation within the Republic of Vietnam, or on its inland waterways, from January 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975. Inland waterways include those rivers, canals, enclosed bays, and delta areas within the land mass of South Vietnam. Open water ports along the coast, such as Da Nang Harbor, are not considered inland waterways and a ship's anchorage in these ports does not qualify those aboard for a presumption of exposure.

For Navy Vietnam Veterans, the presumption of exposure is available for all who served aboard a ship that operated primarily or temporarily on the inland waterways. The presumption is also available for Veterans who served aboard offshore vessels when evidence shows that the ship docked or otherwise sent crew members ashore for leave or work details. For this presumption to apply, the Veteran must provide a statement of personally going ashore.

The USS Canberra is already on the VA ship list for operating on Vietnam's inland rivers during April 1966, January 1967, and December 1968. A review of the submitted deck logs shows that the USS Canberra was anchored in Da Nang Harbor during April 1965 and sent helicopters ashore. Because it was a naval group flagship, it is likely that motorized whaleboats were also sent ashore, although this is not specified in the deck logs. Therefore, VA will assume that some crew members went ashore and

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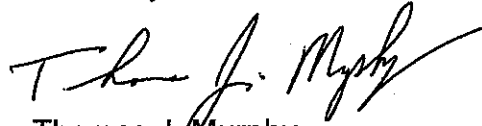
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add this date under the category of ships that sent some crew members ashore, as shown below.

USS Canberra (CAG-2) [Guided Missile Cruiser] sent helicopters and small boats ashore while anchored in Da Nang Harbor during April 1965

I hope that this information will assist you with your response to Mr. Damp. Thank you for your support of our nation's Veterans and their families.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Murphy
Director
Compensation Service