

Nine Diseases Linked to Service in Southwest Asia, Gulf War

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The VA has published final regulations that list nine infectious diseases to conditions that are presumed to be linked to service in Southwest Asia, including Iraq, Afghanistan and the first Gulf War, for veterans submitting claims for health care and disability compensation.

These regulations, effective Sept. 29, affect veterans who served in the Southwest Asia Theater of operation, beginning with the Gulf War on Aug. 2, 1990, through the current war and those who served on or after Sept. 19, 2001, in Afghanistan. "Claims for these diseases can be submitted under the new rules of presumptive service connection on that date," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman.

The presumption of service connected disability includes the long-term health effects associated with brucellosis, campylobacter jejuni, coxiella burnetii (Q fever), malaria, mycobacterium tuberculosis, nontyphoid salmonella, shigella, visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

"The nine presumptive diseases were found to be prevalent in Southwest Asia, have been diagnosed among U.S. troops serving there, and are known to cause long-term adverse health effects," said Gorman.

Veterans will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan, a diagnosis of one of the nine diseases, some within a one-year period after service, and a current disability as a result of that disease. The time limits have been set for seven of the diseases. There is no time limit for

visceral leishmaniasis or tuberculosis. Most of the presumptive diseases would be diagnosed within one year of separation from service, although some conditions may go undiagnosed until a later time.

“For non-presumptive conditions, a veteran is required to provide medical evidence to establish an actual connection between military service and a specific disease,” Gorman said.

For additional information and to file a claim, please contact your nearest DAV National Service Office. Offices can be found at the DAV Web site at www.dav.org.