



# Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure

*Committee on Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure, Board on the Health of Select Populations, Institute of Medicine*

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Over 3 million U.S. military personnel were sent to Southeast Asia to fight in the Vietnam War. Since the end of the Vietnam War, veterans have reported numerous health effects. Herbicides used in Vietnam, in particular Agent Orange have been associated with a variety of cancers and other long term health problems from Parkinson's disease and type 2 diabetes to heart disease. Prior to 1997 laws safeguarded all service men and women deployed to Vietnam including members of the Blue Navy. Since then, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has established that Vietnam veterans are automatically eligible for disability benefits should they develop any disease associated with Agent Orange exposure, however, veterans who served on deep sea vessels in Vietnam are not included. These "Blue Water Navy" veterans must prove they were exposed to Agent Orange before they can claim benefits. At the request of the VA, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) examined whether Blue Water Navy veterans had similar exposures to Agent Orange as other Vietnam veterans.

*Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure* comprehensively examines whether Vietnam veterans in the Blue Water Navy experienced exposures to herbicides and their contaminants by reviewing historical reports, relevant legislation, key personnel insights, and chemical analysis to resolve current debate on this issue.

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