



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
Regional Office**

**STEVEN [REDACTED]**

**VA File Number  
28 [REDACTED]**

**Represented By:  
GORDON A GRAHAM  
Rating Decision  
06/25/2026**

**INTRODUCTION**

The records reflect that [REDACTED] was a Veteran of the Vietnam Era. The Veteran served in the Navy from January 12, 1968 to January 11, 1972. The Veteran died on December 7, 2025 and an original death claim was received on June 16, 2026. Based on a review of the evidence listed below, we have made the following decision(s) on your claim.

**DECISION**

1. Service connection for the cause of death is granted.
2. Basic eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance is established.

**EVIDENCE**

- Veteran's Death Certificate, received June 16, 2026
- VA Form 21-534EZ, Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits, received June 16, 2026



- Treatment records from the Puget Sound VA Medical Center (VAMC) dated June 2025 through December 2025
- Herbicide Exposure Verification Memorandum, dated December 11, 2024

## **REASONS FOR DECISION**

### **1. Service connection for the cause of death.**

The death of a Veteran will be considered as having been due to a service-connected disability when the evidence establishes that such disability was either the primary or contributory cause of death.

Prior to death, the Veteran was service connected for unspecified depressive disorder; erectile dysfunction; coronary artery disease status post myocardial infarction; and prostate cancer (remission) with voiding dysfunction. The death certificate recorded the Veteran's cause of death as failure to thrive and Lewy Body Dementia with other significant condition of congestive heart failure with history of ascites.

Under the provisions of 38 USC 1116, VA has determined that presumption of service connection based on certain locations associated with herbicide exposure during military service. Based on the Veteran's service in the waters of Vietnam, we have conceded his in-service herbicide exposure.

VA has determined that a positive association exists between exposure to herbicides and the subsequent development of the following conditions: AL amyloidosis; chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne; bladder cancer; type 2 diabetes (also known as type II diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes); Hodgkin's disease; hypertension; hypothyroidism; ischemic heart disease (including, but not limited to, acute, subacute, and old myocardial infarction; atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease including coronary artery disease (including coronary spasm) and coronary bypass surgery; and stable, unstable, and Prinzmetal's angina); all chronic B-cell leukemias (including, but not limited to, hairy-cell leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia); monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance; multiple myeloma; non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; Parkinson's disease; parkinsonism; early-onset peripheral neuropathy; porphyria cutanea tarda (PCT); prostate cancer; respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea); and soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma). PCT, chloracne, and early-onset peripheral neuropathy are required to become manifest to a compensable degree within one year from last exposure.

Lewy Body Dementia is a type of atypical parkinsonism. As such, service connection for Lewy Body Dementia is warranted.

Service connection for the cause of the Veteran's death is granted on a primary basis as the evidence shows that it was directly related to military service. (38 CFR 3.312)

## **2. Eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 35.**

Eligibility for Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) is derived from a Veteran who was discharged under other than dishonorable conditions; and has permanent and total service-connected disability(ies); or permanent and total disability(ies) existed at the time of death; or the Veteran died as a result of service-connected disability(ies). Also, eligibility exists for a service member who died in service. Finally, eligibility can be derived from a service member who, as a member of the armed forces on active duty, has been listed for more than 90 days as missing in action; captured in line of duty by a hostile force; or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power. Electing to receive DEA benefits while receiving additional compensation, pension or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments based on the student's school attendance is considered a duplication of benefits and is prohibited. (38 USC Chapter 35, 38 CFR 3.807, 38 CFR 21.3021, 38 CFR 21.3023)

Basic eligibility for Dependents' Educational Assistance is granted as the evidence shows the Veteran died as a result of a service-connected disability(ies). (38 USC Chapter 35, 38 CFR 3.807)

### **REFERENCES:**

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Pensions, Bonuses and Veterans' Relief contains the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs which govern entitlement to all Veteran benefits. For additional information regarding applicable laws and regulations, please consult your local library, or visit us at our website, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

