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***If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?***

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# Aging Vietnam Vets Face Onslaught of Agent Orange Ailments

Ivey DeJesus at The Patriot-News just completed a compelling [project](#) looking at Vietnam veterans and the issues they're facing as they age.

Beyond the normal wartime traumas—post-traumatic stress, injuries caused by bullets and landmines, and the musculoskeletal mayhem that comes with carrying too much gear and jumping out of too many vehicles—these veterans also face the long-term effects of Agent Orange.

The U.S. Air Force sprayed 20 million barrels of Agent Orange, a defoliant produced by Monsanto Corporation and Dow Chemical, to remove leaves from the trees so guerrilla fighters could not hide.

DeJesus reports that 2.8 million veterans who served between 1962 and 1971 were exposed to Agent Orange. They've since suffered glioblastoma, a rare brain cancer; prostate cancer; multiple myeloma, a rare blood cancer; neurological disorders; and thyroid cancer, she found. Glioblastoma, left untreated, typically results in death within three months. Research shows a causal relationship between herbicide exposure and glioblastoma.

But even though the Department of Veterans Affairs [recognizes](#) many disorders as service-connected, the Pennsylvania veterans haven't been able to get their benefits. Often, their widows wait years after they've lost their spouses before finally receiving the veteran's benefit. One spouse of a Pennsylvania veteran, [Brenda Galinac](#), told DeJesus VA didn't recognize her husband's brain cancer as service-connected.

Another veteran waited five years for his claim to be approved, even though his conditions were on VA's official list. A third waited 10 years for compensation.

These are tough cases, and Bergmann & Moore deals with them daily. Often, veterans face denial after denial, but are finally able to seek help when they appeal a VA decision. Both Glenn Bergmann and Joe Moore worked as attorneys at VA before beginning their own firm to help veterans through the process.

For example, eight years after her husband's death from glioblastoma, Sheree Evans finally received the compensation Vietnam veteran Edward Evans should have received. VA had consistently said brain cancer is not an Agent-Orange related disability. Officials insisted Evans had to prove his cancer was due to exposure to the defoliant. Sheree took her case to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the highest level of the VA appeals process. The board denied her claim, and she went to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, where the original decision was vacated. VA ordered another medical opinion, and the doctor determined there was no connection between glioblastoma and Agent Orange. With the help of Bergmann & Moore and an outside medical opinion, the Board of Veterans' Appeals ultimately granted her appeal, leading to hope that VA would eventually add glioblastoma to the presumptive list. So far, it has not. Sheree Evans' fight lasted eight years. She is active with the [Order of the Silver Rose](#), an advocacy group for veterans and their families who have been affected by Agent Orange.