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Widow Wins VA Benefits from Agent Orange Exposure

February 20, 2011, 01:30:00PM. By [Heidi Turner](#)

Ozark, MOIt may have been eight years since her husband died from brain cancer, but a woman has won the right to be paid **VA benefits** from her husband's death. The win also means veteran benefits could be opened up to veterans who developed brain cancer after exposure to Agent Orange. The ruling could have a huge impact on VA disability benefits.



Sheree Evans' husband, Edward, died of brain cancer eight years ago. Evans claimed his death was the result of exposure to Agent Orange in the Vietnam War. Initially, the benefits were denied with the VA claiming Edward Evans' specific type of brain cancer was not included on the list of Agent Orange-related health problems. Evans appealed that decision with the US Veterans Administration. Evans won her appeal—reportedly the first time the VA has admitted that Agent Orange could be linked to glioblastoma multiforme, the brain cancer that Edward Evans died of.

According to the *News-Leader* (02/17/11), the VA appeals board found there was as much evidence that Evans' brain cancer was a result of his exposure to Agent Orange as not. In such situations, the appeals board rules with the family and allows benefits.

That acknowledgement could mean that other veterans who have the brain cancer, or their survivors, could be eligible for VA benefits. It is not, however, a guarantee that veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and have glioblastoma multiforme will receive those benefits.

In January 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that veterans who served in Korea from 1968 through 1971 were likely exposed to Agent Orange, making them eligible for treatment at VA medical centers. Veterans who served in Korea between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971 in a unit that operated in or near the Korean demilitarized zone can submit claims for access to benefits.

Meanwhile a proposed budget would give the Department of Veterans Affairs \$58.8 billion for operational costs and a further \$65.5 billion for veterans benefits. Of that, \$208 million will increase benefits for people caring for veterans wounded in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, \$270 would go to health issues affecting female veterans and \$939 million will go to the VA's homelessness prevention programs, the *Washington Post* (02/15/11) reports.