

**AVVA Toxic Exposure Committee Activities Report**  
**Nadine Owen, AVVA Toxic Exposure Committee Co-Chair**  
**Nancy Switzer, AVVA Toxic Exposure Committee Co-Chair**

We first would like to thank all of you for fighting for legislation regarding The Toxic Exposure Act for our children/grandchildren. In December it was passed and the President signed this bill in the late midnight hours. Now more than ever we must educate our veterans, their families and the public on the effects of dioxin and our children. We are now waiting for things to happen as there is a new administration.

At the request of the Oregon State Commander of the American Legion, a Toxic Exposure education segment was presented in February at the Conference of American Legion Executives held in Lebanon, Oregon. Very well received, commanders from several areas expressed interest in having the information presented at their local legions and that we are currently in the process of scheduling for later this year. In March, Town Hall meetings were held in conjunction with Samaritan Health Services (5 hospitals/91 clinics) at their Newport Educational Center on March 9, 2017 and at Oregon State University on March 10, 2017. Panel included Dr. Tom Berger, Director of VVA Veterans Health Council, Nancy Switzer, Founder and past president of the AVVA and Senior VSO, Jim Pace. Both events were well received with much participation by veterans of all eras and their families, as well as, local VSO's, elected official and area newspaper(Newport). On March 11, 2017, the same panel presented at the Portland VA Hospital. In attendance were veterans (and some family members) of all eras, as was the Portland VA Hospital Administrator and Oregon Public Broadcasting who filmed the presentation so as to be a part of a Vietnam War series that they are producing to air sometime later this year.

Both Samaritan Health Services and the Portland VA Hospital have expressed wanting to have a Toxic Exposure presentation geared specifically toward their medical staff. We are currently in the organizational process of doing just that with a target date of late September/early October 2017. As noted above, future presentations are also in the organizational stages for area American Legions.

The following week we did another Town Hall meeting in Victoria, Texas at the Conference and Educational Center. This was supported by four (4) VVA chapters in Texas and every detail was done by Leonard Sterndale and his wife. Approximately 200 veterans and their families were present. Panelists were Mokie Porter, VVA Communication Director, Mark McCabe, Accredited VVA Veteran Service Officer and Nancy Switzer. Many questions and requests were asked.

They all were great Town Hall meetings.

**Blue Water Navy Update:**

Currently there is legislation regarding the Blue Water Navy which affects the ships that were off shore in Vietnam. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, D-NY introduced S.422 which has 39 sponsors and Representative David Valadao, R-CA, HR.299 which has 238 co-sponsors. **Please contact your representative in support of the bi-partisan bills.** This is long overdue!

### **Round-up Ruling Allows Warning Label for Chemical:**

We have been following this quite closely and in all of our town hall meetings we have been warning the public on the use of Round-up which is purchased for the sole reason of killing weeds. This is highly toxic and is a dioxin. In California this past week a judge issued their final ruling in favor of the State of California in which Monsanto was trying to stop California from listing a key ingredient in its popular herbicide, carcinogen. Monsanto argued that the state is out of step with other regulatory agencies, including the US Environmental Protection Agency and the European Food Safety Authority, in listing glyphosate as causing cancer. The state can now issue a warning label for chemicals.

### **Camp Lejeune Update:**

If you know a Veteran, former Reservist, or national guard member with One or More of the following condition: Adult Leukemia, Aplastic Anemia and other Myelodysplastic Syndromes, Bladder Cancer, Kidney Cancer, Liver Cancer, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Parkinson's Disease, that has an honorable discharge, and served at Camp Lejeune, NC for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987 you may be entitled to service-connected disability benefits from the VA. If you are awarded service-connected disability benefits you may also be entitled to medical/prescription benefits for those conditions.

Also, if you know of a surviving spouse of a veteran who passed away from one of the above conditions or a contributing complication, they may be entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation based on the veteran's death.

For all of the above, please see an Accredited Veteran Service Officer.