(VSR VIP Pre-D) Southwest Asia Development

Lesson Plan

Time Required: 2 Hours

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| Lesson Description | |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. | |
| TMS # | 4307809 |
| Prerequisites | None |
| target audience | The target audience is VSR Entry Level.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the VSR Entry, Intermediate or Journey Level employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 2 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Southwest Asia Development (VSR VIP Pre-D) PowerPoint Presentation * Southwest Asia Development (VSR VIP Pre-D) Trainee Handout |
| Training Area/Tools | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:   * Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions * Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation * Handouts, which include a practical exercise * Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials * Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material   Trainees require access to the following tools:   * VA TMS to complete the assessment * Compensation Service Intranet: Rating Job Aids * Internet acces for the Live Manual * Internet acces for Electronic Code of Federal Regulations |

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| Pre-Planning | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session. * Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan. * Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson. * Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session. * When required, reserve the training room. * Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed). * Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson. * This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins. |
| Training Day | * Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and computers. * Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require. * Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly. * Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly. * Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available. * The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers. |

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| **Southwest Asia Development (VSR VIP Pre-D)** | | |
| **INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION** | | Complete the following:  Introduce yourself  Ensure that all learners have the required handouts |
| **time required** | | 0.5 hours |
| **Purpose of Lesson** | | This explains and demonstrates to the VSR how to develop claims for disabilities based on the provisions of 38 CFR §3.317, to include undiagnosed illness, medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness (MUCMI), and presumptive infectious diseases. |
| **Lesson Objectives**  *Slide 2*  *Handout page 2* | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the VSR will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.   * Explain the background of Southwest Asia claims * Describe methods to verify service in Southwest Asia * Recognize undiagnosed conditions or symptoms associated with Southwest Asia service * Identify Medically Unexplained Chronic Multi-Symptom Illness (MUCMI) * Identify Infectious Diseases and qualification requirements for Veterans with Afghanistan service * Demonstrate development procedures for Southwest Asia claims   Stress that the topic briefly covers specific Gulf War environmental hazards such as burn pits, particulate matter, sulfur fire, or Chromium VI. For more information on those topics, see the training titled “Claims Based on Exposure to Environmental Hazards in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Djibouti” as well as Gulf War Veterans and service in Southwest Asia. | |
| **MOTIVATION** | As part of the VA’s ongoing commitment to provide quality care to Veterans, the VA has established a presumption of service connection for certain diseases, undiagnosed illnesses and Medically Unexplained Chronic Multi-Symptom Illnesses (MUCMI) associated with service in Southwest Asia. It is vital that every VSR understand how to process these types of claims to ensure the VA’s continued commitment in support of our Veterans. | |
| **STAR Error code(s)** | Task 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | |
| **References**  *Slide 3*  *Handout pg 3* | All M21-1 references are found in the [Live Manual Website](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/).   * [38 CFR 3.303 Principals related to service connection](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad275643432556b9dda942343fb89296&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div58) * [38 CFR 3.317, Compensation for certain disabilities occurring in Persian Gulf Veterans](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad275643432556b9dda942343fb89296&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div58) * [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii.1.E, Developing Claims Based on Service in Southwest Asia Under 38 CFR 3.317](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?encodedHash=%23!agent%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Farticle%2F554400000014938%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Developing-Claims-Based-on-Service-in-Southwest-Asia-Under-38-CFR-3317%3FfromQuery%3DSouthwest%20Asia) * [M21-1, PartIV, Subpart ii, 2. D, Service Connection (SC) for Qualifying Disabilities Associated with Service in Southwest Asia](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?encodedHash=%23!agent%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Farticle%2F554400000014557%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-ii-Chapter-2-Section-D-Service-Connection-SC-for-Qualifying-Disabilities-Associated-with-Service-in-Southwest-Asia%3FfromQuery%3DSouthwest%20Asia) | |

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| **Topic 1: Presumptive SC for Undiagnosed Illness**  **and MUCMIs Under §3.317(a&b)** | | | |
| **Introduction** | | | This topic will define who is a qualifying Veteran and what constitute undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness. |
| **Time Required** | | | 0.5 hours |
| **OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points** | | | Topic objectives and teaching points to support the topic objectives:   * Defines:   + Background   + Qualifying service for Southwest Asia Theater of Operations   + Southwest Asia Qualifying Disability     - Undiagnosed Illness     - MUCMI     - FGID   + Infectious Diseases List SWA and Afghanistan   + Eligibility to Qualify for Southwest Asia service   + Verifying Southwest Asia and Afghanistan service |
| **Provisions of the Persian Gulf War Veterans’ Benefits Act of 1994**  ***Slide 4***  *Handout pg 4* | On November 2, 1994, Congress enacted the “*Persian Gulf War Veterans’ Benefits Act*,” Title I of the “*Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1994*,” [*Public Law (PL) 103-446*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-108/pdf/STATUTE-108-Pg4645.pdf).  The PL added a new section 38 U.S.C 1117, authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to compensate any Gulf War (GW) Veteran suffering from a chronic disability resulting from an undiagnosed illness or combination of undiagnosed illnesses which manifested either   * During active duty * Duty in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the GW, or * To a degree of 10 percent or more within a presumptive period following service in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the GW. | |
| **Provisions of the Persian Gulf War Veterans’ Act of 1998**  *Slide 4*  *Handout pg 4* | The “Persian Gulf War Veterans’ Act of 1998,” [PL 105-277](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ277/pdf/PLAW-105publ277.pdf) authorized the VA to compensate GW Veterans for diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities that are determined by VA regulation to warrant a presumption of service connection (SC) based on a positive association with exposure to one of the following as a result of GW service   * a toxic agent * an environmental or wartime hazard, or * a preventive medication or vaccine. | |
| **Provisions of the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001**  *Slide 5*  *Handout pg 4* | The “Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001,” [PL 107-103](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ103/pdf/PLAW-107publ103.pdf), expanded the definition of “qualifying chronic disability” under [38 U.S.C. 1117](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/38/1117) to include, effective March 1, 2002, not only a disability resulting from an undiagnosed illness but also   * a medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness (MUCMI) that is defined by a cluster of signs and symptoms, and * any diagnosed illness that is determined by VA regulation to warrant presumption of SC.   Reference:  For more information on MUCMIs, see [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 2.D.1.i](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/#1i). | |
| **Background**  *Slide 4,5*  *Handout pg 5* | | | VA statutes and regulations provide for service connecting certain chronic disability patterns based on exposure to environmental hazards experienced during military service in Southwest Asia   * Smoke and particles from oil well fires * Exposure to pesticides and insecticides * Exposure to indigenous infectious disease * Exposure to solvent and fuel fumes * Ingestion of pyridostigmine bromide tables (nerve gas antidote) * The combined effective of multiple vaccines administered upon deployment * Inhalation of ultra fine-grain sand particles * Smoke and particles from military installation “burn pit” fires that incinerated a wide range of toxic waste materials   ***Explain***that the focus of this lesson will be on Gulf War and Southwest Asia and does not cover *specific Gulf War environmental hazards such as burn pits, particulate matter, sulfur fire, or Chromium VI. For more information on those topics, see the training titled “*Claims Based on Exposure to Environmental Hazards in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Djibouti*.”* *Or other (non-GW) environmental hazards, such as Camp Lejeune and Atsugi.)* |
| **Southwest Asia Theater of Operations** *Slide 6*  *Handout pg 5-6* | | | The Southwest Asia Theater of Operations includes the following locations and the airspace above them   * Iraq * Kuwait * Saudi Arabia * the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia * United Arab Emirates * Bahrain * Qatar * Oman * Gulf of Aden * Gulf of Oman * Persian Gulf * Arabian Sea * Red Sea   ***Explain*** this is an **inclusive** list of the areas that the Veteran must have served in to qualify for service connection for undiagnosed illness and MUCMIs.  ***Ask***: Is there any country that stands out to you as not being included on this list?  ***Answer***: Afghanistan |
| **Southwest Asia Qualifying Disabilities**  *Slide 7*  *Handout pg 6* | | | **Undiagnosed Illnesses-**A type of chronic qualifying disability where qualifying signs and/or symptoms cannot be attributed to any known clinical diagnosis by history, physical examination and laboratory tests  **Medically Unexplained Chronic Multi-Symptom Illness-(**MUCMI)   * chronic fatigue syndrome * fibromyalgia * functional gastrointestinal disorder |
| **Undiagnosed Illness Signs and Symptoms**  *Slide 8, 9*  *Handout pg 6, 7* | | | There are 13 categories of signs and symptoms that may be manifestations of an undiagnosed illness that cannot be attributed to clinical diagnosis.   * joint pain * muscle pain * neurological signs or symptoms * headaches * neuropsychological signs or symptoms * gastrointestinal signs or symptoms * abnormal weight loss * fatigue * sleep disturbances * respiratory signs and symptoms (upper and lower) * cardiovascular signs and symptoms * skin signs and symptoms * menstrual disorders   ***Note*:** The existence of a clinical diagnosis with specific etiology, which may weigh against §3.317 entitlement, does not preclude the ordering of a Gulf War examination unless all symptoms claimed by the Veteran are *clearly attributable* to the diagnosis, such as a condition like sleep apnea that is definitely diagnosed via sleep study. |

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| **Medically Unexplained Chronic Multi-Symptom Illness (MUCMI)**  *Slide 10, 11*  *Handout pg 7, 8* | Diagnosed illness that has:   * inconclusive etiology and inconclusive pathophysiology * overlapping symptoms and signs * features such as:   + fatigue and pain   + disability out of proportion of physical finding and   + inconsistent demonstration of laboratory abnormalities   MUCMIs include but are not limited to:   * chronic fatigue syndrome * fibromyalgia, or * functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGIDs), excluding structural gastrointestinal diseases.   **Explain:** These specifically identified MUCMIs are presumptive, but that does not mean that ones that are not cited here could not also be service connected. |
| **Functional Gastrointestinal Disorder**  *Slide 12, 13*  *Handout pg 8, 9* | ***Functional gastrointestinal disorders*** (FGIDs) are a group of diagnosed conditions that are a type of MUCMI.  They are characterized by chronic or recurrent symptoms that are   * unexplained by any structural, endoscopic, laboratory, or other objective signs of injury or disease, and * may be related to any part of the gastrointestinal tract.   FGID diagnoses include but are not limited to   * irritable bowel syndrome, and * functional   + dyspepsia   + vomiting   + constipation   + bloating   + abdominal pain syndrome   + dysphagia   Diagnosis of a FGID under generally accepted medical principles normally requires   * symptom onset at least six months prior to diagnosis, and * the presence of symptoms sufficient to diagnose the specific disorder at least three months prior to diagnosis.   Characteristic FGID symptoms include   * abdominal pain * substernal burning or pain * nausea * vomiting * altered bowel habits (including diarrhea, constipation), * indigestion * bloating * postprandial fullness, and * painful or difficult swallowing.   Explain again, this will be the doctor’s determination. Not the adjudicator or rating activity. |
| **Infectious Disease List Southwest Asia and Afghanistan**  *Slide 14*  *Handout pg 9* | **Infectious Disease list under 38 CFR 3.317 (c)**  Explain that although the infectious diseases are also listed under §3.317, they are separate from the undiagnosed illness and MUCMIs.  Effective September 29, 2010, presumptive SC is established under [38 CFR 3.317(c)](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=9f0ce8e46464a943446b3eabce7d0edb&node=se38.1.3_1317&rgn=div8) for the infectious diseases listed in the table below if   * the Veteran served on active duty   + in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the GW, as defined in     - [38 CFR 3.317(e)](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=9f0ce8e46464a943446b3eabce7d0edb&node=se38.1.3_1317&rgn=div8), and     - [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 2.D.1.f](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014557/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-ii-Chapter-2-Section-D-Service-Connection-SC-for-Qualifying-Disabilities-Associated-with-Service-in-Southwest-Asia#1f), or   + in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001, and * the disease becomes manifest to a compensable degree within the time limit specified in the table. |

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| Bruscellosis | One Year |
| Campylobacter Jejuni | One Year |
| Coxiella burnetii (Q fever) | One Year |
| Malaria | One Year or at a time when standard accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period began during qualifying period of service |
| Mycobacterium tuberculosis | No Limit |
| Nontyphoid Salmonella | One Year |
| Shigella | One Year |
| Visceral leishmaniasis | No Time Limit |
| West Nile Virus | One Year |

**Note:** The one year time period specified in the table above means within one year from the date of separation from a qualifying period of service as specified in [38 CFR 3.317 (c)(3)(ii)](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=9f0ce8e46464a943446b3eabce7d0edb&node=se38.1.3_1317&rgn=div8).

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| **Topic 2: Developing Southwest Asia Claims** | |
| **Introduction** | This topic will define who is a qualifying Veteran and what constitute undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness. |
| **Time Required** | 0.5 hours |
| **OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points** | Topic objectives and teaching points to support the topic objectives:   * Outline necessary development actions and considerations |
| **Developing Southwest Asia Claims** | ***Explain***that development for claims based on service in Southwest Asia is not significantly different than developing other types of claims. If anything, they should be handled with as liberal of an approach as possible. |
| **Devloping Southwest Asia Claims with No Medical Condition Identified**  *Slide 15*  *Handout pg 11* | Claim must be substantially complete. The claim is not considered substantially complete if the Veteran alleges exposure to environmental hazards but does not claim SC for specific disability. If there is no contention identified follow appropriate procedures.   * Attempt to contact Veteran by telephone * If unable to reach Veteran telephonically infom the Veteran that the claim is not considered complete * Follow notification requirements for an incomplete application   There is no requirement for a specialized Section 5103 notice.  **NOTE:** Refer to this reference if the claim is incomplete:  M21-1 I.1.B.1.g - Notification Requirement for an Incomplete Application.  ***Explain*** For any new claim for SC for a qualifying disability under 38 CFR 3.317 resulting from service in Southwest Asia, additional development to the Veteran is not required as the evidentiary requirements are covered under the Disability Service Connection evidence table of the VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits. |

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| **Eligibility to Qualify for Southwest Asia**  *Slide 16*  *Handout pg 10, 11* | A Veteran who served on active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the GW period.  The GW period extends from August 2, 1990, through a date yet to be determined by law or Presidential proclamation.  Veterans who served Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001.  Explain that the only Veterans who are eligible for consideration of service connection for Undiagnosed Illness, MUCMIs, and infectious diseases are those who have qualifying service. First step when you receive one of these claims is to develop for verification of qualifying service as outlined previously. |
| **Verifying Southwest Asia and Afghanistan Service**  *Slide 17, 18*  *Handout pg 11* | DD 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, verification of Southwest Asia service   * Service in Southwest Asia with exact dates listed * Iraq Compaign Medal * Kuwait Liberation Medal * Afghanistan Campaign Medal   DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, service in Southwest Asia potentially verified   * Southwest Asia Service Medal * Global War on Terrorism Service/Expeditionary Medal * Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal   DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, Southwest Asia service not verified   * Global War on Terrorism Medal   Service Records   * all STRs * all personnel records (PIES or DPRIS)   VA/DoD Identity Repository (VADIR): considered electronic DD-214.  Go to Military History tab, look at Deployment Period and Special Pay Periods, look at Location.  This provides details of dates and locations during deployments.  **Note**: Remind students that Afghanistan service, once verified by DD Form 214, or personnel records will only be considered for Infectious Diseases as identified under 38 CFR 3.317(c).  **Exception:** If Southwest Asia Service Medal was awarded solely for service in Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria or Jordan to include airspace from January 17, 1991 through November 30, 1995 it does not qualify as Southwest Asia service |
| **Afghanistan Service for Infectious Diseases**  *Slide 19*  *Handout pg 12* | Service in Afghanistan, once it has been verified by the DD 214 or personnel records, will only be considered for Infectious Diseases as identified under 38 CFR 3.317(c) |
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| **Development of Southwest Asia Claims**  *Slide 20*  *Handout pg 13* | For any new claim for SC for a qualifying disability under [38 CFR 3.317](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=f229d024585f9c6198819439ad4a0419&ty=HTML&h=L&r=SECTION&n=se38.1.3_1317) resulting from service in Southwest Asia, additional development to the Veteran is not required as the evidence requirements are covered under the *Disability Service Connection* evidence table of the [*VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf)   * Ensure a Gulf War undiagnosed illness flash is input in SHARE and the Environmental Hazard for claimed conditions but not previously granted special issue indicator is added to the contention in VBMS. * When an examination is needed for a claim under the provisions of 38 CFR 3.317, request:   + a Gulf War General Medical Examination (Including Burn Pits) Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ), and   + any required specialist DBQs as defined in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.1.h. * Enter appropriate Exam Review note in VBMS.   NOTE: Veteran does not have to claim the condition is related to Southwest Asia service if Southwest Asia service can be verified during review of record and the Veteran is claiming a condition or symptom identified by 38 CFR 3.317 |
| **When to Request a Gulf War General Medical Examination**  *Slide 21*  *Handout pg 13* | The threshold for requesting exam is lower than the standard to prove entitlement for service connection because the VA has a duty to assist in substantiating the claim.  Request a Gulf War general medical examination when the threshold for an examination is met as provided in [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 1.E.2.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014938/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Developing-Claims-Based-on-Service-in-Southwest-Asia-Under-38-CFR-3317#2a).  When an examination is needed for a claim under the provisions of [38 CFR 3.317](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=0995d33f9047781b71559a1428fccffd&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_1317&rgn=div8), requesta   * Gulf War General Medical Examination (Including Burn Pits) Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ), and * any required specialist DBQs as defined in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.1.h](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000015809/M21-1,-Part-III,-Subpart-iv,-Chapter-3,-Section-A---Examination-Requests-Overview).   **Exception**:  Do not request a Gulf War general medical examination if one has been completed in response to a pending claim or a decision that has not yet become final per [38 CFR 3.160(d)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad35a75ff932683b9d123718d32bf38b&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_1160&rgn=div8).  In these cases, only order the specialty DBQ specific to the claimed condition. |
| **Required Language for Gulf War General Medical Exam**  *Slide 22*  *Handout pg 13, 14* | It is essential Regional Offices provide all examiners of Southwest Asia claims the proper terminology and opinion language specific to Southwest Asia Claims.   * *Notice to Examiners in Southwest Asia Claims* (M21-1.IV.ii.1.E.2.m.) must be included in each Gulf War general medical examination and specialist examination requested. * Definition language (M21-1.IV.ii.1.E.2.n.) must be included with all specialist examinations requested for Southwest Asia claims.   **Note:** Examination requests completed in Exam Request Builder (ERB) enables placing the required language and GW Fact Sheets to the examination request.  Examinations created in VBMS, Examination Management System (EMS) enables the requestor to add the *Notice to Examiners in Southwest Asia Claims* by selecting general medical Gulf War opinion under **Is Specialty Language Needed?** |
| **Impact of a Confirmed Diagnosis on requesting a Gulf War General Medical Exam**  *Slide 23*  *Handout pg 14* | The Veteran has often sought treatment for a claimed chronic condition, sign or symptoms. In many cases, it is likely that the medical provider has provided a diagnosis for the symptoms. It is important to understand that a diagnosis for a condition does not rule out the need for an examination.   * The existence of a clinical diagnosis, other than an MUCMI, with specific etiology, which may weigh against [38 CFR 3.317](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=0995d33f9047781b71559a1428fccffd&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_1317&rgn=div8) entitlement, does not preclude the ordering of an examination ***unless*** all symptoms claimed by the Veteran are clearly attributable to the diagnosis * If there is a question as to whether the claimed signs and symptoms are attributable to an established clinical diagnosis, and if the criteria have been met, an examination is necessary * In such cases when an examination is warranted, the examiner’s workup must include an assessment of whether signs and symptoms represent a disease with a clear and specific etiology or whether they fall into a different disability pattern   **NOTE**: Examinations should be referred to an RVSR for clarification. |
| **When Not to Request a Gulf War General Medical Exam**  *Slide 24*  *Handoug pg 15* | * Unnecessary when claim is adequate to be considered substantiated even if threshold for examination is met. * Claim is established on a direct basis . * There is a current diagnosis of a MUCMI **however, an exam might still be needed.** * Competent medical diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS). * Skin, neurological, or fatigue with competent medical diagnosis of diabetes and evidence attributing symptoms to diabetes. * Single joint illness and evidence shows trauma to joint and known clinical diagnosis as trauma. * No potential for entitlement based on 38 CFR 3.317.   For more information see M21-1 IV.ii.1.E.2. |
| **Special Considerations for Brain Cancer**  *Slide 25*  *Handout pg 16* | There is no presumption for brain cancer due to service in Southwest Asia, although special processing must be completed.  If there is evidence Veteran served in Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during Gulf War I (January 17, 1991 through April 11, 1991) Veteran warrants examination and opinion  If there is no record of Southwest Asia service or there is not proof of a diagnosis of brain cancer, send the claim to a rater for decision.  Follow specific procedures outlined in M21-1.IVii.1.E.3.d. Procedures for Requesting Examinations in Claims for SC of Brain Cancer. |

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| **Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up** | | |
| **Introduction**  *Discuss the following:* | | The Southwest Asia Development (VSR VIP Pre-D)  Allow the student to complete the Gulf War/Southwest Asia practical exercise. |
| **Time Required** | | 0.5 hours |
| **Lesson Objectives** | | You have completed the Southwest Asia Development (VSR VIP Pre-D) lesson.  The trainee should be able to demonstrate how to develop claims for disabilities based on the provisions of 38 CFR §3.317, to include:   * Explain the background of Southwest Asia claims * Describe methods to verify service in Southwest Asia * Recognize undiagnosed conditions or symptoms associated with Southwest Asia service * Identify Medically Unexplained Chronic Multi-Symptom Illness (MUCMI) * Indentify infectious diseases and qualification requirements for Veterans with Afghanistan service * Demonstrate development procedures for Southwest Asia claims |