Rating Gulf War Claims  
(Post Challenge RVSR)

Trainee Handout

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Objectives

* Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of rating claims for disabilities resulting from exposure to specific environmental hazards in the Gulf War and 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
* Identify the appropriate decisional action to take, diagnostic code(s), evaluation(s), and special issue indicators.

References

All M21-1 references are found in the [Live Manual Website](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/).

* [38 CFR 3.317, Compensation for certain disabilities occurring in Persian Gulf veterans](http://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, Claims Based on Service in Southwest Asia](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)
* [Disabilities Associated with Service in Southwest Asia](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)
* [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii.1.I .6, Developing Claims Based on Exposure to Environmental Hazards](https://vaww.compensation.https/vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)
* [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii.2.C.5, SC for Disabilities Resulting From Exposure to Other Specific Environmental Hazards](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)
* [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii.2.D, Service Connection (SC) for Qualifying](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)

Practical Exercise

*A review is a tool used to judge the level of knowledge the group has acquired as a result of the training. It is not used for an individual evaluation.*

Please read the following scenarios and answer the questions that follow:

Veteran submits VA Form 21-526EZ for shortness of breath. He provides a statement that these symptoms began when he was in Djibouti. (Service in Djibouti is shown on his DD214.) VA Respiratory Conditions DBQ provides a diagnosis of asthma (treatment with an inhaler) and a medical opinion relating this condition to the Veteran’s exposure to particulate matter and burn pits. A rationale is provided citing review of the provided fact sheets and the known long term health effects such exposure can cause on the respiratory system.

1. Would you Grant, Deny, Defer?
2. What is the reason for your decision?
3. What is the appropriate diagnostic code?

Veteran submits VA Form 21-526EZ for tingling in his hands and feet. He provides a statement that these symptoms began when he was in Afghanistan. (Service in Afghanistan is shown on his DD214 in 2012.) Peripheral Nerves Conditions DBQ provides a finding of mild neuritis in both hands (lower radicular group) and feet (posterior tibial nerve) and a medical opinion relating this condition to the Veteran’s exposure to burn pits. A rationale is provided citing review of the provided fact sheets and the known long term health effects such exposure can cause on the peripheral nervous system.

1. Would you Grant, Deny, Defer?
2. What is the reason for your decision?
3. What are the appropriate diagnostic codes?

Veteran submits VA Form 21-526EZ for nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. He provides a statement that these symptoms have persisted over the last year, since his return from his tour in Iraq. (Service in Iraq is shown on his DD214.) Gulf War General Medical Examination concludes that there is no clinical diagnosis or known cause of these symptoms. The Veteran suffers from recurrent pyrosis, dysphagia, vomiting, and ongoing mild diarrhea.

1. Would you Grant, Deny, Defer?
2. What is the reason for your decision?
3. What are the appropriate diagnostic codes?

Veteran submits a substantially complete 21-526EZ (FDC) claiming service connection for leishmaniasis. Service treatment records and personnel records are all of record and show no complaints or treatment in service, and one period of foreign service in Afghanistan in 2008. Private medical evidence shows treatment several years after release from active duty for Visceralleishmaniasis, continuing until just a month prior to receipt of the Veteran’s claim.

1. Would you Grant, Deny, Defer?
2. What is the reason for your decision?
3. What are the appropriate diagnostic codes?