

Attached are the highlights of the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) FY-2011 budget from the VA's own "FY-2011 Fast Facts".

As you can see, the VA has asked for \$2.149 Billion for administrative costs supporting VA Disability claims. This is an increase of about 27% (\$460 Million) over FY-2010. Included in the FY-2011 increase is a 9% increase in what the VA pays its 3,000 attorneys to fight veterans who file or appeal claims.

The VA also claims its disability compensation as an "entitlement program". It is not, it is compensation for illnesses, injuries, and wounds suffered by veterans while they were on active duty and in service to this country. Veterans do not receive an entitlement, what they receive is an earned benefit, particularly if they were exposed to hazardous situations due to performing their official military duties.

By requesting this increase in the VA FY-11 budget, the VA is really asking to increase the size of its bureaucracy, not providing compensation and benefits to those who gave up their health for the United States. What is the VA's priority, the veterans, or its own bureaucracy?

It is suppose to be the veteran. But it is not, and has not been the veteran as the priority.

The VA actually takes money from retired military veterans for the compensation they receive, if their disability rating is 50% or less. In other words, a veteran who served for 22 years, and has a 30% VA Disability rating loses \$376 per month from his military service retirement pay to collect that \$376 from the VA. The veteran is paying for his own compensation, the VA is not. No other group of retirees have to pay for their own disability ratings but the retired veteran. The US Senate recently removed an amendment from a bill already approved by the House that would have allowed retired military veterans to receive "concurrent receipt" of their full military retirement and their VA disability compensation. This amounts to a "tax increase" on retired and disabled US Veterans as the Senate wants to continue to take away an already earned benefit, even though it is not called a "tax".

Does this add to the overall federal budget? Yes, it does. However, the Congress can pay for veterans compensation and concurrent receipt by controlling the budget increases in the VA alone. The VA wants some \$3.3 Billion for "information technology". In the recent past, the VA has spent countless billions of information technology including computer systems and programs, only to find out these programs did not work, and canceled the project. There are many adjustments the Congress can make to the budget to pay for our veterans.

There are approximately 200 veterans from Guam who have filed claims, or have appeals pending on their exposure to Agent Orange, and the deadly dioxin in it. The vast majority of these claims have been denied or in some stage of the appeal process because they have been initially denied. These veterans have suffered from various cancers that even the VA acknowledges are caused by Agent Orange exposure, as well as diabetes and auto-immune diseases. There have been about 3 or 4 Guam Agent Orange exposure claims approved by the VA, or the VA Courts. Yet, the remaining 195, or so, Guam veterans are told no records of Agent Orange stored, used, disposed of, or transported to and/or from the island can be found. Andersen AFB on Guam was the major user and storage facility of Agent Orange. It was shipped to/from Guam aboard US Navy ships and US Air Force aircraft. The Guam Agent Orange stockpile was the main source for Agent Orange used in Vietnam. Many corroded and rusted drums of Agent Orange were simply dumped on Guam. Agent Orange was used to control vegetation all over Andersen, all the Navy installations, and other places on the island. Even the US EPA and Guam EPA acknowledge Andersen AFB still has dioxin contamination as high as 19,000 ppm. Andersen AFB was also a major B-52 base during the Vietnam War and conducted bombings in North or South Vietnam almost daily.

The Blue Water Navy, which conducted combat operations and operated of the coasts of Vietnam processed the water used aboard those ships from the waters off Vietnam. The water contained the overspray and runoff of Agent Orange and dioxin. That water, once processed aboard ship (and still contained dioxin) was used to drink, shower, cook, and laundry aboard these ships, of all types.

The extent of Agent Orange exposure to veterans who never stepped foot in Vietnam goes much further than the Vietnamese land mass.

It is long over due these veterans be compensated and cared for. There are currently about 300 Vietnam Era veterans dying each day, a rate even higher than veterans who fought the Korean War. The average age of the Vietnam Era Veteran today is only 62.

Ed Jackson,  
MSgt (RET), USAF



# VA 2011 Budget Fast Facts



## Major Appropriation Issues

### Transformation

- Provides resources to support the transformation of VA into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century organization to ensure Veterans are cared for over a life time, from the day the oath is taken to the day they are laid to rest.

### Medical Care

- Secures timely, sufficient, and predictable funding for health care through 2012 with advance appropriations
- Continues gradual expansion of healthcare eligibility; providing access to more than 500,000 previously ineligible veterans by 2013
- \$5.2 billion (up \$410 million) to expand inpatient, residential, and outpatient mental health programs
- \$799 million (up \$265 million) to implement VA's comprehensive plan to reduce homelessness. This includes \$218 million for the Homeless Grants and Per Diem program and liaisons to assist community organizations
- \$250 million to improve access to care in rural and highly rural areas
- \$6.8 billion (up \$859 million) to expand institutional and non-institutional long term care services. Of this amount, \$163 million (up \$42 million) is for home tele-health to improve access to care.
- \$218 million (up \$19 million) to meet the needs of women Veterans
- \$2.6 billion (up \$597 million) for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom to meet the needs of over 439,000 Veterans

### Claims Processing

- \$2.149 billion, (up \$460 million, or 27 percent) to support improved benefits processing through a combination of additional staff, improved business practices, and expanded technology.
- Supports the completion of more than 1.2 million disability compensation and pension claims, a 16 percent increase over 2010.
- Provides funding to meet increased education claims workload resulting from new Post-9/11 GI Bill
- \$13.4 billion in an FY 2010 supplemental for new presumptions related to Agent Orange exposure

### National Cemetery Administration

- \$251 million for operations and maintenance to ensure VA's cemeteries are maintained as national shrines.
- The budget also provides effective stewardship of the environment through green and renewable energy projects.

### Information Technology

- More than \$3.3 billion to support a reliable and accessible IT infrastructure, a high-performing workforce, and modernized information systems
- \$347 million for development and implementation of HealtheVet (electronic health record)
- \$145 million for paperless claims processing system

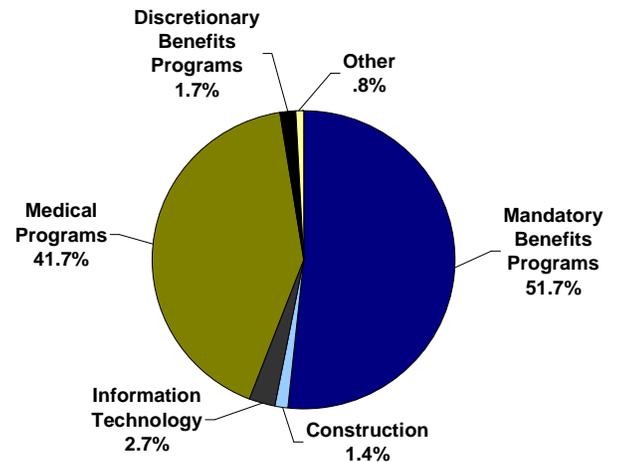
### Construction

- Supports three medical facility projects already underway, and begins two new medical facility projects.
- Provides funding to begin new burial policies that will provide a burial option to an additional 500,000 Veterans and eligible family members.

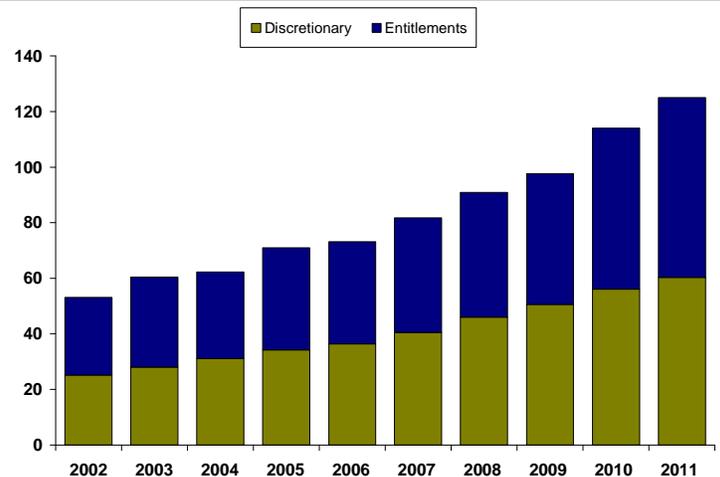
### Entitlement Benefits

- \$64.7 billion for mandatory benefits including compensation for new Agent Orange presumptive conditions and Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits.

## FY 2011 VA Budget Breakout



## VA's Historical Perspective



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
DISC.	25.1	28	31.1	34.2	36.4	40.5	46	50.6	56.1	60.3
ENT.	28	32.4	31.2	36.8	36.8	41.3	44.9	47.1	58.0	64.7
<b>Total VA</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>71.0</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>114.0</b>	<b>125.0</b>

## Discretionary Funding by Appropriation

(\$ in millions)

Medical Care	51,538
Medical and Prosthetic Research	590
Veterans Benefits Administration	2,149
National Cemetery Administration	251
General Administration	463
Information Technology	3,307
Construction/Grants	1,750
Office of Inspector General	109
Loan Administration Funds	165
<b>Total Discretionary</b>	<b>60,321</b>