

Viet Nam veteran ex gratia update for March – Information for spouses

Ex gratia payments to surviving spouses where the veteran partner died on or prior to 1 November 2018 and had a diagnosis of MGUS or hypertension

On 30 November 2021, it was announced that two new conditions have been added to the list of Prescribed Conditions eligible for an ex gratia payment under the Vietnam Veterans 2006 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). These two new conditions are Hypertension and Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS).

What's happened so far

VA has processed over 700 ex gratia payments of \$40,000 each to current Vietnam veteran clients who had been diagnosed with one of the new conditions when the announcement was made last November.

VA has also received a number of enquiries from surviving spouses and veterans' organisations including RNZRSA and NZVVA, asking whether or not an ex gratia payment is available to a surviving spouse if their veteran partner had been diagnosed with hypertension or MGUS, but passed prior to 1 November 2018 (this is the date that the US National Academy of Sciences added hypertension to the list).

What's the impact for spouses

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets a higher threshold for eligibility for a spouse payment. These payments are smaller than those for veterans who are directly affected, but acknowledge the loss spouses have suffered from the untimely death of their partner. We have looked again at the intent of the MOU, and have clarified that if a Vietnam veteran had been diagnosed with hypertension or MGUS and either of these conditions contributed to the veteran's death, then the surviving spouse can make an application for an ex gratia payment of NZD\$25,000, even if the veteran passed on, or prior to, 1 November 2018. Details on our website including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been updated to reflect this.

FAQs about the ex gratia payment and MoU (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/news-events/articles/more-vietnam-veterans-will-become-eligible-for-an-ex-gratia-payment/>)

How to apply

Surviving spouses should contact VA to discuss the ex gratia payment application process. The request for an ex gratia payment will require the surviving spouse to provide:

- Their full name
- Postal and email address, and phone number
- The veteran's full name and date of birth
- A copy of the full death certificate showing cause of death
- Consent in writing from the executor of the estate for VA to obtain the veteran's medical records
- A copy of the Letters of Administration/Probate/Will
- Marriage certificate or proof of relationship at time of death
- Bank account details for payment.

Applications are processed by priority

The priority for handling all applications received by VA is to process those received from living veterans first. As such, VA will deal with all applications in the following order of priority:

- Terminal illness
- Mental health
- Financial hardship
- All other applications including new ex gratia payment applications

More information

To find out more, contact us, or read the full FAQs.

Contact us (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us/>)

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Tags

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