

## **DISABILITY BENEFITS EXPANDED FOR CAMP LEJEUNE WATER CONTAMINATION**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that they plan to propose to expanded disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

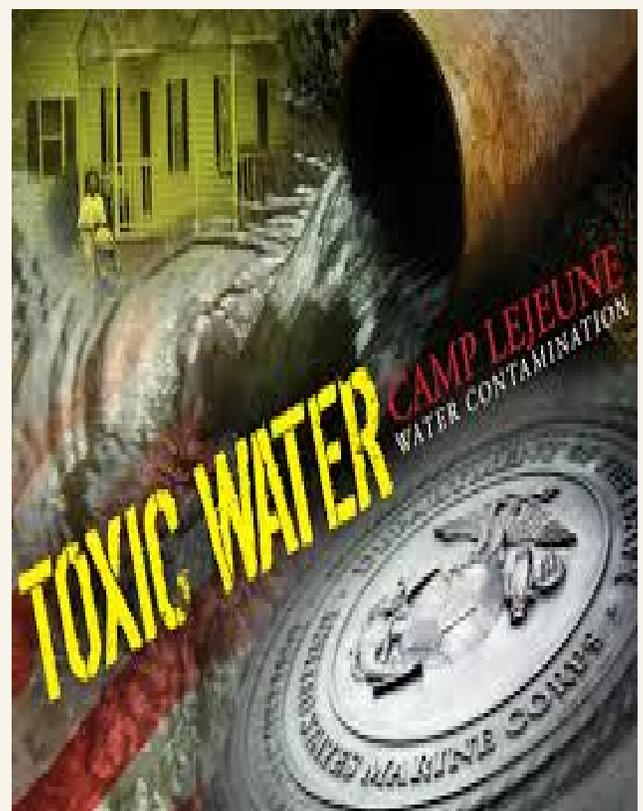
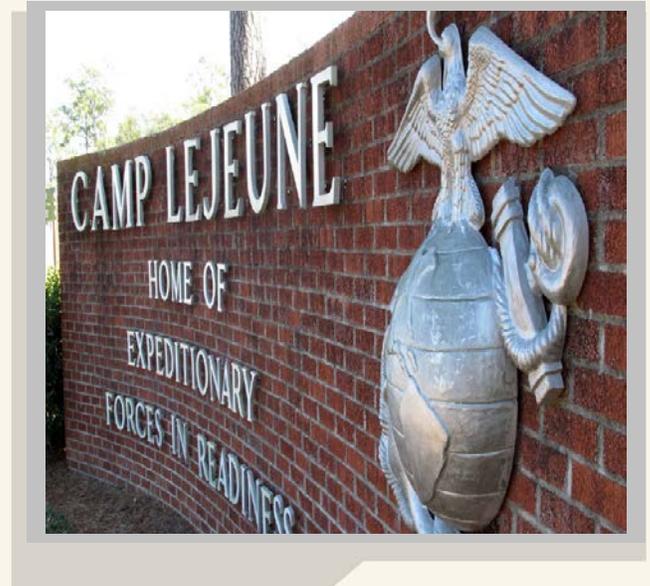
From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with health conditions.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases risk of certain health conditions.

ATSDR determined that drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchlorethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks.

Based on review of current medical science and ATSDR's findings, the Department of Veterans Affairs intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for the following conditions:

- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Leukemia
- Multiple Myeloma
- Scleroderma
- Parkinson's Disease
- Aplastic Anemia/Myelodysplastic Syndrome



JANUARY 2016

## VA MAKES CHANGES TO THE VETERAN CHOICE PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that it will make a number of changes to make participation in the Veterans Choice Program easier and more convenient for Veterans who need to use it. This streamlines eligibility requirements.

Under the updated criteria, a Veteran is eligible for the Veterans Choice Program if he or she is enrolled in the VA healthcare system and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Told by his or her local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care within 30 days of the date of the Veterans physician determines he/she needs to be seen or within 30 days of the date the Veteran wishes to be seen if there is no specific date from his/her physician;
- Lives more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility with a full time primary care physician;
- Needs to travel by air, boat, or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to his /her home;
- Faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, a medical condition, the nature or simplicity or frequency of the care needed and whether an attendant is needed.
- Lives in a State or Territory without full service





## *Upcoming Events*

The Veterans Office will be closed on January 1<sup>st</sup>, for the New Year's Holiday and January 18, 2016 for the Martin Luther King holiday.

### *Reminder*

- If you have ideas for a topic or something you would like to know more about to put in the newsletter please let me know. Email me at [ctravis@catawbacountyn.c.gov](mailto:ctravis@catawbacountyn.c.gov) or call me 828-465-8255 and I will try and get it in the next newsletter.