

approximately 700 U.S. Servicemembers may have been impacted by a specific airborne hazard while serving at a water injection plant in Qarmat Ali, Iraq. The Department of Defense (DoD) was unable to determine specific exposure levels near the water treatment facility. In 2010, in response to DoD's notification, the VA offered no-cost medical evaluations and encouraged the cohort to enroll in a new Qarmat Ali medical surveillance program within the Gulf War Registry. The QA cohort is also eligible to participate in the AHOBPR program due to their deployment to Iraq. As part of the planned 5-year periodic medical follow-up and surveillance program, self-reported information will be collected through the AHOBPR as outlined above. Information collected is voluntary and is used to provide outreach and quality health services to AHOBPR participants. Collected data contributes to VA's ability to understand the potential health effects of the exposure to burn pit emissions and other airborne hazards during deployment, such as particulate matter.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published at 84 FR 19829 on May 6, 2019, pages 19829 and 19830.

Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR) Self-Assessment/ Questionnaire

Affected Public: Individuals and households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 33,333 hours.

Estimated Average Burden per Respondent: 40 minutes.

Frequency of Response: Once.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 50,000.

Subset of AHOBPR, Qarmat Ali Questionnaire

Affected Public: Individuals and households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 114 hours.

Estimated Average Burden per Respondent: 10 minutes.

Frequency of Response: Once.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 686.

By direction of the Secretary.

Danny S. Green,

Interim VA Clearance Officer, Office of Quality, Performance and Risk (OQPR), Department of Veterans Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0605]

Agency Information Collection Activity: Application for Accreditation as a Claims Agent or Attorney, Filing of Representatives' Fee Agreements and Motions for Review of Such Fee Agreements

AGENCY: Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of General Counsel (OGC), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before September 23, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information through Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) at www.Regulations.gov or to Jonathan Taylor, Office of General Counsel (022D), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420 or email to jonathan.taylor2@va.gov. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0605" in any correspondence. During the comment period, comments may be viewed online through FDMS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jonathan Taylor at (202) 461-7699 or FAX (202) 273-6404.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995, Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, OGC invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of OGC's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of OGC's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5901, 5904; 38 CFR 14.629, 14.636.

Title: Application for Accreditation as a Claims Agent or Attorney, Filing of Representatives' Fee Agreements and Motions for Review of Such Fee Agreements.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0605.

Type of Review: Reinstatement of a previously approved collection.

Abstract: Applicants seeking accreditation as claims agents or attorneys to represent benefits claimants before VA must complete VA Form 21a. The applicant is required to file the application with OGC to establish initial eligibility for accreditation. The information requested includes basic identifying information, as well as certain information concerning training and experience, military service, and employment. The information is used to evaluate qualifications, ensure against conflicts of interest, and to establish that statutory and regulatory eligibility requirements, *e.g.*, good character and reputation, are met. If a potential area of concern is identified on the application, additional information may be requested. Applicants who become accredited as agents and attorneys may not lawfully represent claimants without completing and maintaining accreditation requirements. The data is used to determine the applicant's eligibility for accreditation as a claims agent or attorney. The information collected with regard to an attorney or agent's good standing with other courts, bars, and Federal and State agencies and completion of their ongoing CLE requirements is used by OGC in monitoring accredited attorneys and agents to determine whether they continue to have the appropriate character and reputation and that they remain fit to prepare, present, and prosecute VA benefit claims.

The data collected under Filing of Representatives' Fee Agreements is used by OGC to associate the fee agreement

with the attorney or agent of record and for potential use in a reasonableness review. The fee agreement information is used by VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to associate the fee agreement with the claimant's claims file for potential use in processing as the direct payment of a fee from the claimant's past-due benefits award. The information provided in the fee agreements are used by both VBA and OGC to determine whether they are in compliance with the statutes and regulations governing paid representation. The data collected under Motions for Review of Such Fee Agreements is used when a motion is filed by a claimant or raised sua sponte by VA to determine the reasonableness of an agent or attorney fee from a claimant's award of VA benefits. Also, when a claimant receives an award of benefits and has retained more than one attorney or agent who has been found eligible for direct payment of fees, the data is used to determine each of the attorney's or agent's contribution to and responsibility for the ultimate outcome of the claimant's claim.

Affected Public: Individuals and businesses or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Annual Burden:

a. *Application for Accreditation as a Claims Agent, VA Form 21a:* 2,137.5 hours (975 hours for initial responses by attorneys, 225 hours for initial responses by non-attorneys, 187.5 hours for follow up responses by non-attorneys, and 750 hours for recertifications by accredited attorneys and agents)

b. *Filing of Representatives' Fee Agreements:* 3,125 hours (750 hours for first time filers and 2,375 hours for repeat filers).

c. *Motions for Review of Such Fee Agreements:* 420 hours.

Estimated Average Burden per Respondent:

a. *Application for Accreditation as a Claims Agent or Attorney, VA Form 21a:* 20 minutes (45 minutes for initial responses by attorneys, 45 minutes for initial responses by non-attorneys, 45 minutes for follow up responses by non-attorneys, and 10 minutes for recertifications by accredited attorneys and agents)

b. *Filing of Representatives' Fee Agreements:* 13 minutes (1 hour for first time filers and 10 minutes for repeat filers).

c. *Motions for Review of Such Fee Agreements:* 2 hours.

Frequency of Response: One time.

Estimated Number of Respondents:

a. *Application for Accreditation as a Claims Agent, VA Form 21a:* 6,350

(1,300 initial responses by attorneys, 300 initial responses by non-attorneys, 250 follow up responses by non-attorneys, and 4,500 recertifications by accredited attorneys and agents).

b. *Filing of Representatives' Fee Agreements:* 15,000 (750 first time filers and 14,250 repeat filers).

c. *Motions for Review of Such Fee Agreements:* 210.

By direction of the Secretary.

Danny S. Green,

VA Interim Clearance Officer, Office of Quality, Performance and Risk, Department of Veterans Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board, Notice of Meetings

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, that the subcommittees of the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board will be held Tuesday, August 6 through Friday, August 9, 2019, at the 20 F Conference Center, 20 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20001; and Tuesday, October 29 and Wednesday, October 30, 2019, at the Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport, 1480 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202. The meetings will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m., on the dates listed below:

Meeting	Date(s)
Chronic Medical Conditions and Aging.	August 6, 2019.
Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders and Neuropathic Pain.	August 6, 2019.
Behavioral Health and Social Reintegration.	August 6-7, 2019.
Career Development Program.	August 6-7, 2019.
Sensory Systems and Communication Disorders.	August 7, 2019.
Regenerative Rehabilitation Rehabilitation Engineering and Prosthetics/Orthotics.	August 8, 2019. August 8, 2019.
Brain Health and Injury	August 8-9, 2019.
Musculoskeletal Health and Function.	August 8-9, 2019.
Center and Research Enhancement Award Program.	October 29-30, 2019.

The subcommittee meetings will be open to the public for approximately one-half hour at the start of each meeting to cover administrative matters and to discuss the general status of the program.

The objective of the Board is to provide for the fair and equitable

selection of the most meritorious research projects for support by VA research funds and to offer advice for research program officials on program priorities and policies. The ultimate objective of the Board is to ensure that the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development program promotes functional independence and improves the quality of life for impaired and disabled Veterans.

Board members advise the Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service and the Chief Research and Development Officer on the scientific and technical merit, the mission relevance, and the protection of human and animal subjects of Rehabilitation Research and Development proposals. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

Members of the public who wish to attend the open portion of the teleconference sessions may dial 1 (800) 767-1750, participant code 35847. The remaining portion of each subcommittee meeting will be closed to the public for the discussion, examination, reference to, and oral review of the research applications and critiques. During the closed portion of each subcommittee meeting, discussion and recommendations will include qualifications of the personnel conducting the studies (the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy), as well as research information (the premature disclosure of which would likely compromise significantly the implementation of proposed agency action regarding such research projects). As provided by subsection 10(d) of Public Law 92-463, as amended by Public Law 94-409, closing the meeting is in accordance with 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552b(c)(6) and (9)(B).

No oral or written comments will be accepted from the public for either portion of the meetings. Those who plan to attend (by phone or in person) the open portion of a subcommittee meeting must contact Tiffany Asqueri, Designated Federal Officer, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, at Department of Veterans Affairs (10X2R), 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420, or email Tiffany.Asqueri@va.gov, at least five days before the meeting. For further information, please call Mrs. Asqueri at (202) 443-5757.