Military History Checklist Guide

The Military History Checklist is designed to help community hospices identify their veteran patients, evaluate the impact of the experience and determine if there are benefits to which the veteran and surviving dependents may be entitled. This Guide provides a quick overview of the questions and implications for each. Additional information can be found in the Military History Toolkit and on the Department of Veterans Affairs website (www.va.gov).

Many Veterans who did not experience combat did experience other types of traumatic assignments, for example, the person who transports body bags or the clerk who enters names of service members who were killed in action.

All hospice programs are encouraged to modify the Military History Checklist to meet their needs and the needs of the Veterans in their community.

1. Did you (or your spouse or family member) serve in the military? Those who have served in the military are a part of a distinct culture with its own language, rituals and norms, and this can define the functioning of entire families, especially when there is a strong familial history of military service. This culture has a number of significant subcultures and era of service, Special Forces service, combat vs. non-combat service, theater, whether the vet was an officer, enlisted vs. drafted, and gender are all vital factors. Also, if a patient's family is currently serving on active duty or engaged in combat operations, this has clear implications for the family's psychosocial needs. Finally, the DD214, a veteran's discharge form, is a primary driver in the VA enrollment process. Verification of discharge status is required for VA enrollment.

There are several ways to obtain a veteran's DD214:

- Many veterans register their DD214 in their local courthouse
- National military archives www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel
- VA benefits office at the local VA regional office.
- 2. In which branch of the military did you serve? As mentioned above, each branch of service has a distinct culture, and has its own methods of training and instruction. The focus of each branch also partially determines the likelihood of combat related trauma. For more information regarding the specific branches of the US military, please see the following: www.marines.mil; www.af.mil; www.navy.mil; www.army.mil; www.uscg.mil
- 3. In which war era or period of service did you serve? Often in the VA or military system a soldier's dates of service are spoken of in terms of the conflict in which the veteran served. As with branch of service, each era of service has its own unique culture, which can dramatically influence the outcome of a soldier's experience. For example, WWII veterans are more likely to have had areas of safe haven than Vietnam veterans, who were often in immediate physical danger and resulted in a higher incidence of stress-related disorders. Korean veterans were often told not to discuss their military service and are sometimes overlooked in the discussion regarding the needs of veterans. A significant number of Korean veterans were POWs held by the Chinese, and subjected to torture and other mistreatment.

Medical issues seen in the various eras and locations are as follows and may be associated with presumptive disabilities:

- a WWII: Infectious diseases, wounds, exposure to nuclear weapons or clean-up, exposure to chemical agents, asbestos.
- b Korea: Injuries related to cold temperatures.
- Cold War: Soldier may have been exposed nuclear testing or materials, or have been exposed to chemical or biological agents.
- d Vietnam: Conditions related to exposure to Agent Orange, infectious diseases.
- Gulf War: Exposure to smoke, complications from immunizations, exposure to chemical and biological agents, infections, exposure to depleted uranium.
- f Iraq: Complications from immunizations, exposure chemical and biological agents,

Magills Guide To Military History

Eric v.d. Luft

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Table of Contents Magills Guide To Military History

- 1. Understanding the eBook Magills Guide To Military History
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Magills Guide To Military History
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
- 2. Identifying Magills Guide To Military History
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - o Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
- 3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Magills Guide To Military History
 - User-Friendly Interface
- 4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Magills Guide To Military History
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Magills Guide To Military History User Reviews and Ratings

- Magills Guide To Military History and Bestseller Lists
- 5. Accessing Magills Guide To Military History Free and Paid eBooks
 - Magills Guide To Military History Public Domain eBooks
 - Magills Guide To Military History eBook Subscription Services
 - Magills Guide To Military History Budget-Friendly Options
- 6. Navigating Magills Guide To Military History eBook Formats
 - o ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Magills Guide To Military History Compatibility with Devices
 - Magills Guide To Military History Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - o Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Magills Guide To Military History
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Magills Guide To Military History
 - Interactive Elements Magills Guide To Military History
- 8. Staying Engaged with Magills Guide To Military History
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Magills Guide To Military History
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Magills Guide To Military History
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Magills Guide To Military History
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Magills Guide To Military History
 - Setting Reading Goals Magills Guide To Military History
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Magills Guide To Military History
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Magills Guide To Military History
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources

- 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
- 14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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