

the claimant in proceedings before VA. Generally, this power of attorney permits VA to release to the attorney, agent, or individual representative records pertinent to the benefit claim. The form contains a release to be completed by the claimant, which permits the claimant to authorize or prohibit VA from disclosing medical records specifically protected by 38 U.S.C. 7332.

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 on December 17, 2002, at page 77320.

Affected Public: Individuals or households, Business or other for-profit, Not-for-profit institutions, and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Annual Burden:

a. VA Form 21—600 hours.

b. VA Form 22a—1,600 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent:

a. VA Form 21—15 minutes.

b. VA Form 22a—15 minutes.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Estimated Number of Respondents:

a. VA Form 21—2,400.

b. VA Form 22a—6,400.

Dated: April 7, 2003.

By direction of the Secretary:

Loise Russell,

Acting Director, Records Management Service.

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