

VA CLAIMS PROCESS

Agenda

Introduction

Initial Paperwork

Gathering Evidence

Submitting the claim

Final tips & takeaways



Initial Paperwork

VA form 21-0966 (Intent to File)

Used to preserve the veteran's date of claim

Allows the veteran a year to gather the necessary evidence and to file a VA form 21-526ez or VA form 20-0995 in that timeframe, and to have that claim be back dated to the intent to file date.

VA form 21-22 (Appointment of Veterans Service Organization)

Gives authorization to the VA to release his/her file to a Veterans Service Organization of the veteran's choosing.

GATHER EVIDENCE PHASE



Types of evidence:

Current Diagnosis

Service Treatment Records

Line of Duty Investigation (LOD)

Nexus Letter

Statement in Support of Claim



Effective evidence

Current Diagnosis

Is the current ailment/issue ever been addressed while in service, meaning it has been annotated in your service treatment records?

Service Treatment Records

Line of Duty Investigation

Current Medical Records

- Ties contention to military service
- Formal determination from military for service connection
- Current diagnosis to show chronicity

Nexus Letters

A medical opinion linking an issue/ailment to service (letter is key if the veteran has been out of the military for some time:

1-An event in service that could have caused or aggravated a disease or condition

#2-A present day diagnosis of the existence of the same disease or condition

#3-A medical opinion linking number 1 with number 2

Key Statements:

- **“More than likely”**
- **“At least as likely as not”**
- **“Highly likely”**

Medical Article/Journals

Needed if a veteran is filing for an issue/ailment that hasn't been accepted by the VA and is not on the presumptive list, but the veteran believes the ailment was caused by toxic exposure, i.e., the veteran has been exposed to Agent Orange and has developed kidney cancer (kidney cancer currently not on the Agent Orange presumptive list) the veteran will need to find a medical article/journal to back claim connecting the two together.



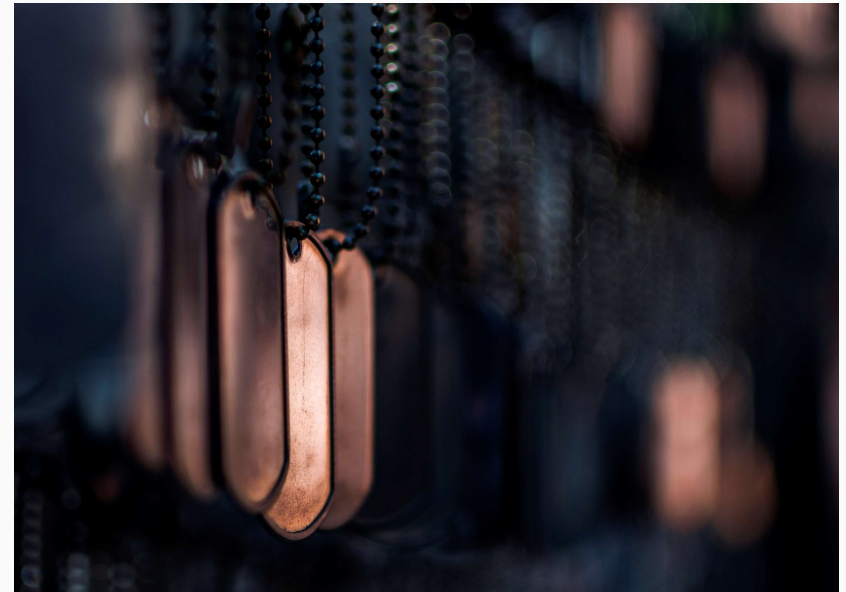
Types of Forms:

21-526ez Application for
Disability

20-0995 Supplemental Claim

20-0996 Higher Level Review

21-686c Declaration of
Dependents



Filling out and submitting a claim

VA 21-526ez (Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits)

This form is used by the veteran that has never filed for a particular issue/ailment or by filing for an increase to a service-connected disability that has been previously approved.

- New Contention
- Increase for a service connected disability
- Temporary 100% for surgery

VA 20-0995 (Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim)

This form is used if the veteran has filed for an issue/ailment that has been denied in the past. New and relevant information will be needed for service connection.

- Nexus Letter
- Medical Journals
- Current diagnosis to show chronicity

20-0996 (Request for Higher level Review)

If the veteran disagrees with the decision and the evidence of record supports a decision in the veteran's favor. The veteran can elect to have the VA contact them or their VSO.

If granted , it has the potential to be backdated to the original date of claim.

- No new evidence can be submitted
- If a duty to assist error is identified; then new evidence can be submitted
- Can take an additional 6 months

VA 21-686c (Declaration of Status of Dependents)

This form will be filled out by the veteran if he/she has dependents, such as a spouse or children under 18 (will need to hit 30% service connection for dependent rate to kick in), and/or dependents that are 18 and older that are enrolled into college.

- Add/Or remove dependents
- Veteran's duty to remove dependent for divorce/death of dependent

Q&A

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THANK YOU