

The following tips are provided to USSOCOM veterans to assist them with their VA claims.

1. Request a copy of your VA claim file. It's free.

Under the freedom of information act you may request a copy of your VA claim file. Should you need assistance with your claim, knowing what you are service connected for, what you are not service connected for and why, may be key to obtaining the benefits you are seeking.

This is a good set of documents to have on hand if you ever want to dispute a decision or want to file a comprehensive claim for an increase. The evidence used to make every decision the VA made and the results of those decisions are contained in that file. It is a vital starting point for any analysis of your current disabilities.

How to do it. Fill out a VA form 214138, Statement in support of claim. On the form simply state the following;

Under the Freedom Of Information Act I would like a complete copy of my VA claim file to be sent to my current address. Thank you.

Important note: If you have previously requested a copy of your claim file, the VA will send you all the documents added since the last request for free, but charge you to send everything they sent before.

2. Make your own file.

Get a manila folder. Punch holes on either side and insert document clips. On the right side put a copy of everything you send to the VA. Make sure you put the date that you mailed it. On the left side put everything the VA sends you.

This makes an excellent tracking system for your claims. There are timelines the VA must follow. When combined with a copy of your existing claims file, you will have a comprehensive history of what or what not the VA has done for you and if they followed the timelines.

3. Temporary 100% evaluations

If you ever have surgery for a condition that you are service connected for, and the doctor prescribes 30 days or more of no work, convalescence etc. file a claim for this.

Under the law (38 CFR part 4.30) you are entitled to a temporary 100 percent evaluation for that condition from the day of surgery until the first day of the month following the prescribed convalescent period.

4. Spousal Aid & Attendance

Should your wife become ill or have an injury that requires the assistance of another person in performing the activities of daily living, and you are a service connected veteran with a disability of 30 percent or more, you may be entitled to extra compensation to offset the need to care for your spouse.

Have your wife's physician fill out VA form 21-2680 and send it to your VA Regional Office for consideration. You can download this form from the web.

5. Parental Aid & Attendance

The same benefit as above applies to the parents of a service connected veteran if the parents are dependent on the children.

Be advised if the parent is a wartime veteran NSC Pension is the greater benefit in many cases.