***Veteran’s Statement***

When relevant details are included in the report, it is more likely that the claim will be approved.

General things to include:

1. All of the training, functions, or duties that may have contributed to the injury or disease
2. Any direct injuries to the affected areas
3. Any sickness or symptoms that might have been relevant
4. What the veteran was doing when the injury happened
5. What, while in the service, made it worse
6. Other parts of his service that could have contributed to that injury
7. Whether he received treatment for that injury
8. Complete history of the injury
9. Illness after service
10. MUST show that the illness or injury has been persistent or continuous
    1. Medical evidence can be used to show persistence and continuity: medical records that show visits to the doctor every year or two with the same complain or injury
    2. Explaining the veteran’s continuing symptoms in the veteran’s statement can also help

If a veteran is claiming service-connection for a back injury, then the veteran should write a letter detailing the facts of the injury. The letter might include:

1. It occurred during a training jump at Airborne School, where his foot caught a rock and he hit the ground improperly;
2. That it immediately caused pain in his lower back;
3. That he went to the Troop Clinic the next day and was given Motrin and told to rest;
4. That it never went away, but the veteran learned to “deal with it;”
5. That every road march caused more pain;
6. That he was unable to do sit-ups for Physical Training;
7. That he also routinely did jumps after that injury, and every jump hurt more;
8. That he continued to be seen by the Troop Clinic, without relief;
9. That his back has continued to hurt since he injured it;
10. That for the last ten years his back has gotten worse;
11. That he has been unable to lift more than ten pounds in the last year; and
12. That his doctor diagnosed him with L1-L2 disc herniation.

***Letters or Statements from Family and Friends***

* Includes both current friends and friends from the service
* Should support the veteran’s timeline and symptoms
* Can also help verify the veteran’s continued or persistent symptoms
* Examples of supporting lay evidence:
  + A letter from the veteran’s Platoon Sergeant, stating that the soldier called from Iraq the day after an attack on camp and sounded terrified.
  + A written statement from the veteran’s mother that the soldier called from Iraq the day after an attack on camp and sounded terrified.
  + A report written by the veteran’s wife that states that her husband has limped and complained of pain ever since her returned from Vietnam.
  + A letter from the veteran to his best friend, while the veteran was in basic training that states that the veteran injured his back.
  + A newspaper article that describes the even during which the veteran was injured.