



DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU: CRITICAL MISTAKES WHEN APPLYING FOR VA BENEFITS

Applying for VA benefits is a complicated process, so it's easy to make a mistake or two. Here are five common mistakes many Veterans make when applying for benefits:

1. Lack of evidence. When making a claim for a service-connected disability, it is vital that you provide ample evidence to the VA. Some claims, such as PTSD (see our second article for more information), are hard to prove – so be aware of the specific forms and documentation needed to validate your claim. If you're applying for a higher rating than you were previously granted, you'll have to provide proof to justify the increase.

2. Missing deadlines. The clock is always ticking when you apply or appeal for VA benefits. The VA has set up deadlines every step of the way, and they take it very seriously when you miss them. Always make sure you understand how much time you have to complete your application or appeal.

3. Not proving your disability is service related. Similar to the first point, it's vital that you prove your disability is a

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direct result of your service. This can be tricky if you've been out of the service for a while but are just now developing a disability. Having the proper documentation from a medical professional is critical.

4. Letting the VA do all the work.

The VA receives thousands of claims every year, so you have to make yours stand out. While the VA has a duty to help Vets by gathering information and arranging a physical, you can't rely on them to build your case for you. However, this only

applies to different parts of the claims process, not all of them.

5. Not hiring a VA lawyer if your claim is denied. If the VA denies your original claim, don't be discouraged – it happens to many, many people. The best thing to do after your claim is denied is to call an experienced VA benefits attorney. But don't delay – you don't want to miss a critical deadline.

Our team of VA disability benefits attorneys is here to help you get the information you need to prove your case. Call us today at 833.534.3577 or email us at contact@JanDilsFoundation.org.



Letter From Jan

Every day, week and year we have Veterans coming home and trying to integrate back into civilian life.

Some have more family support than others.

Many need jobs and affordable housing, and many come home with disabilities. One of the less-obvious

disabilities is PTSD. Did you know that not all PTSD is a result of combat duty? For example, many service-members, such as Coast Guardsmen and women, rarely see combat but are often exposed to deaths in search and rescue missions — stressful work that can cause PTSD. And since they usually go right back into civilian life after their service, their PTSD may go undiagnosed or untreated.

Applying for VA benefits for PTSD or other injuries is, unfortunately,

often a complicated process. In our first article, we have outlined a few mistakes Veterans often make when applying for benefits. We don't want this to happen to you. As long as Veterans are experiencing denials, we are here to fight the good fight. Never hesitate to reach out for a free consultation.

Time is flying by. Spring is almost here and summer is around the corner. We remain optimistic that there are better times ahead!

MINDFULMATTERS



The 5 Love Languages

How do you express love to your significant other? Are you aware that you might not be communicating that love in a way that your partner likes to receive? If so, you're not alone. In fact, many of our team members were completely unaware that the love we have shown our partners might have been getting lost in translation.

Then we discovered the five love languages. The five love languages are different ways of expressing and receiving love: **words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service and physical touch.** Not everyone communicates love in the same way and, likewise, people have different ways they prefer to receive

love. Although we might relate to all the love languages, there is one that speaks to us the most. When you discover your and your partner's primary love language and put it into practice, you will create a much better understanding of each other's needs.

For a much deeper dive into all five love languages, we invite you to take the free love language assessment at www.5lovelanguages.com. Our team completed it last fall, and we've discovered better ways to communicate our appreciation for one another and our partners. What's your love language?

Recreational Spotlight

Mountaineer Military Museum

It's no surprise that the team at Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, cares deeply for the men and women who have served our country in the military. With that appreciation comes an immense interest in the history and stories of those who served. Did you know that West Virginia is home to an amazing military museum that gives a glimpse into the past service of Mountaineers? It's most definitely worth a visit.

The Mountaineer Military Museum in Weston, West Virginia, is one of the best small-town museums of its kind

and is loaded with military artifacts, exhibits and tributes. Recently expanded by 2,100 square feet, the museum has nearly 20 new exhibits featuring personal and historical items from the Korean, Vietnam and Civil Wars. The

museum also features a reflection room where you can go and honor those who have fallen. The Mountaineer Military Museum will be open on Saturdays only from April 1 through December 1. Hours are 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.



I THINK I MAY HAVE PTSD. BUT HOW CAN I PROVE IT?



The easiest way to prove a PTSD stressor is to find the evidence. But, if it were that easy, processing VA disability claims wouldn't take two years or more.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may be getting more attention now, but it's an issue that has been facing Veterans for decades. Regardless of whether a Veteran served during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan or on any combat mission, developing PTSD is a real possibility.

A Veteran does not have to prove his or her PTSD stressor when it is developed as a result of combat. As far as the VA is concerned, there simply must be evidence showing that a Veteran served in a combat-related area. On the other hand, Veterans who did not serve in

combat must prove their PTSD stressors.

The easiest way to prove a PTSD stressor is to find the evidence. But, if it were that easy, processing VA disability claims wouldn't take two years or more. Many factors must be considered when proving a stressor — including the type of PTSD stressor, when it occurred, and how the stressor impacted your performance in the military.

The simplest definition of a stressor is a stimulus that causes stress. But besides combat, what are some stressors that can lead to PTSD, depression and anxiety? One of the most common types of stressors is physical or sexual abuse

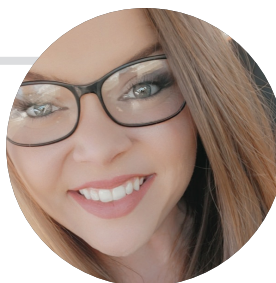
while in service. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is far too common. In an MST claim, as in many other noncombat PTSD claims, you may have one stressor or multiple PTSD stressors. For instance, if someone was physically abused in

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What's Cooking?

EASY HONEY MUSTARD PEPPER CHICKEN

Like the title says: this one's easy.
By **Olivia Roberts**, Reception



INGREDIENTS

4 chicken breasts

Inglehoffer's Honey Mustard (the best!)

3-4 bell peppers – cut into strips (different varieties add a splash of color)

Shredded cheese (I prefer Mexican blend or sharp cheddar)

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Arrange chicken breasts in baking dish. Top each piece with Inglehoffer's Honey Mustard. Place bell pepper strips on top of the chicken and honey mustard. Cover with shredded cheese (I measure with my heart, so a few handfuls will do). Cover dish with foil and bake at 375 degrees for about 30-45 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked.

It's Game Time

COMMONYMS

What's a commonym, you ask? A commonym is a group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed. For example, the words: A car - A tree - An elephant... they all have trunks. These will make you think!

1. Easy - High - Lounge
2. Matchbooks - Magazines - Beds
3. Malls - Bacon - Comic
4. Cuba - Ireland - Japan
5. Mud - Java - Joe
6. Corn - The U.S. Army - Kentucky Fried Chicken
7. Nanny - Kid - Billy
8. Judges - Ruth - Kings
9. Black - Lazy - Bloodshot
10. Body - Crossing - Life

Answers: 1. chairs 2. they have covers 3. they come in strips 4. island nations 5. slang for coffee 6. they have colonels 7. goats 8. books of the bible 9. eyes 10. guards

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service, there's a good chance it occurred more than once. This is often the case for a Veteran who may have been subject to extreme hazing or physical attacks from a superior.

Another stressor occurs when a Veteran witnessed or was exposed to death unrelated to combat. Witnessing someone die during a training mission or commit suicide is a good example of a noncombat PTSD stressor.

The United States Coast Guard provides some good examples of noncombat PTSD stressors. While it's rare for individuals who serve in the Coast Guard to experience combat, many Guardsmen work on search and

rescue missions – and as a result, they are exposed to deaths that Veterans in other branches of the military wouldn't necessarily be exposed to. Often Coast Guard Vets won't file for PTSD or depression because they don't believe their experience warrants a PTSD claim.

Depending on the situation, that may not be true.

As technology advances, so does combat. Most of us are aware of the

impact drones have on modern warfare. A pilot can operate a drone a thousand miles from his or her target. While a drone pilot may not physically be in a combat zone, his or her actions

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may result in the loss of life. Because of this, and several other factors, operating a drone used in combat may be a valid stressor for PTSD.

Stressors, much like the entire VA disability process, can be complicated and frustrating. Let us know if we can help. A sympathetic and compassionate ear is only a phone call away. Call us at **833.534.3577** or email us at contact@JanDilsFoundation.org.

